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THE NEW YORKER

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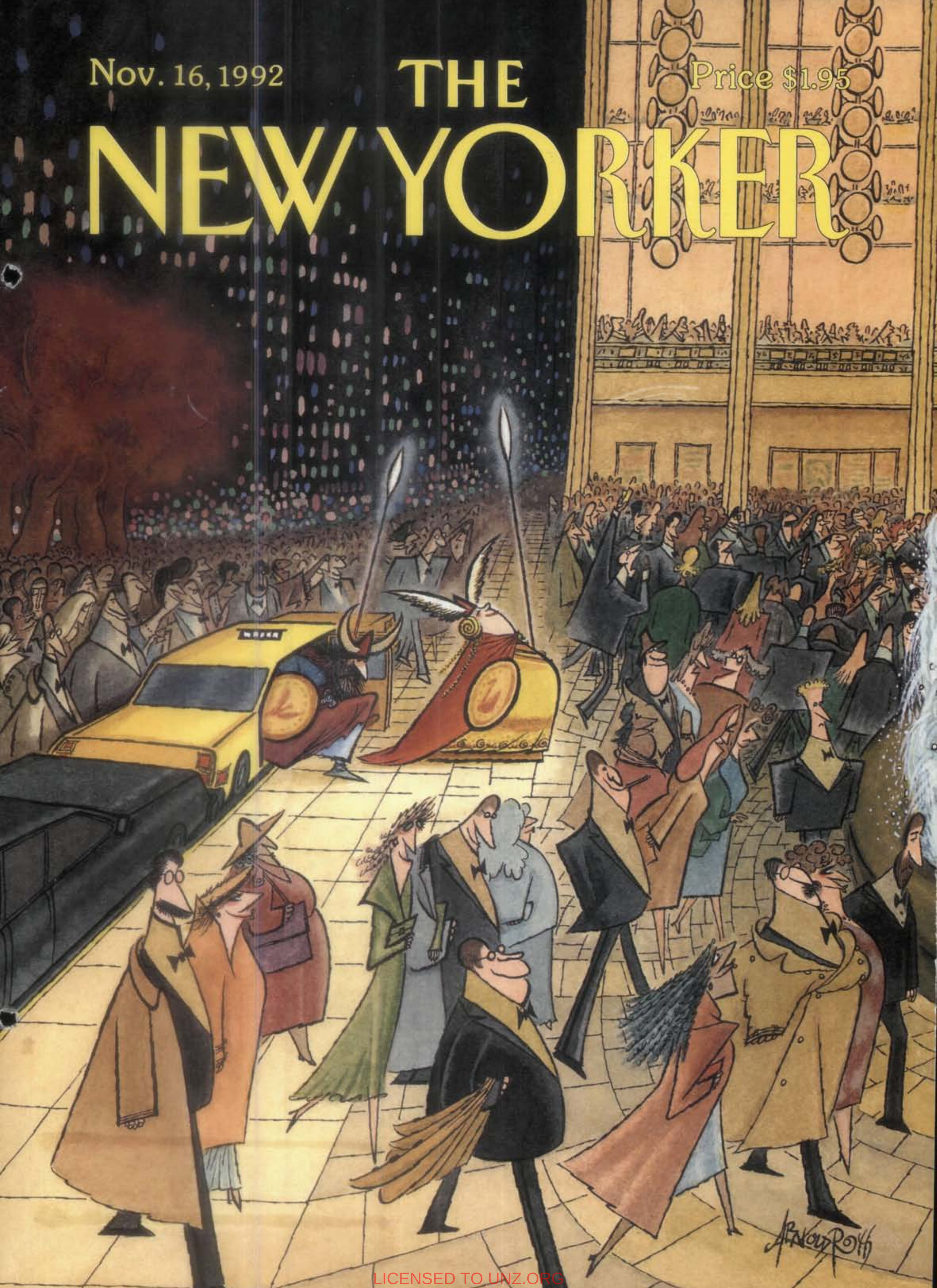
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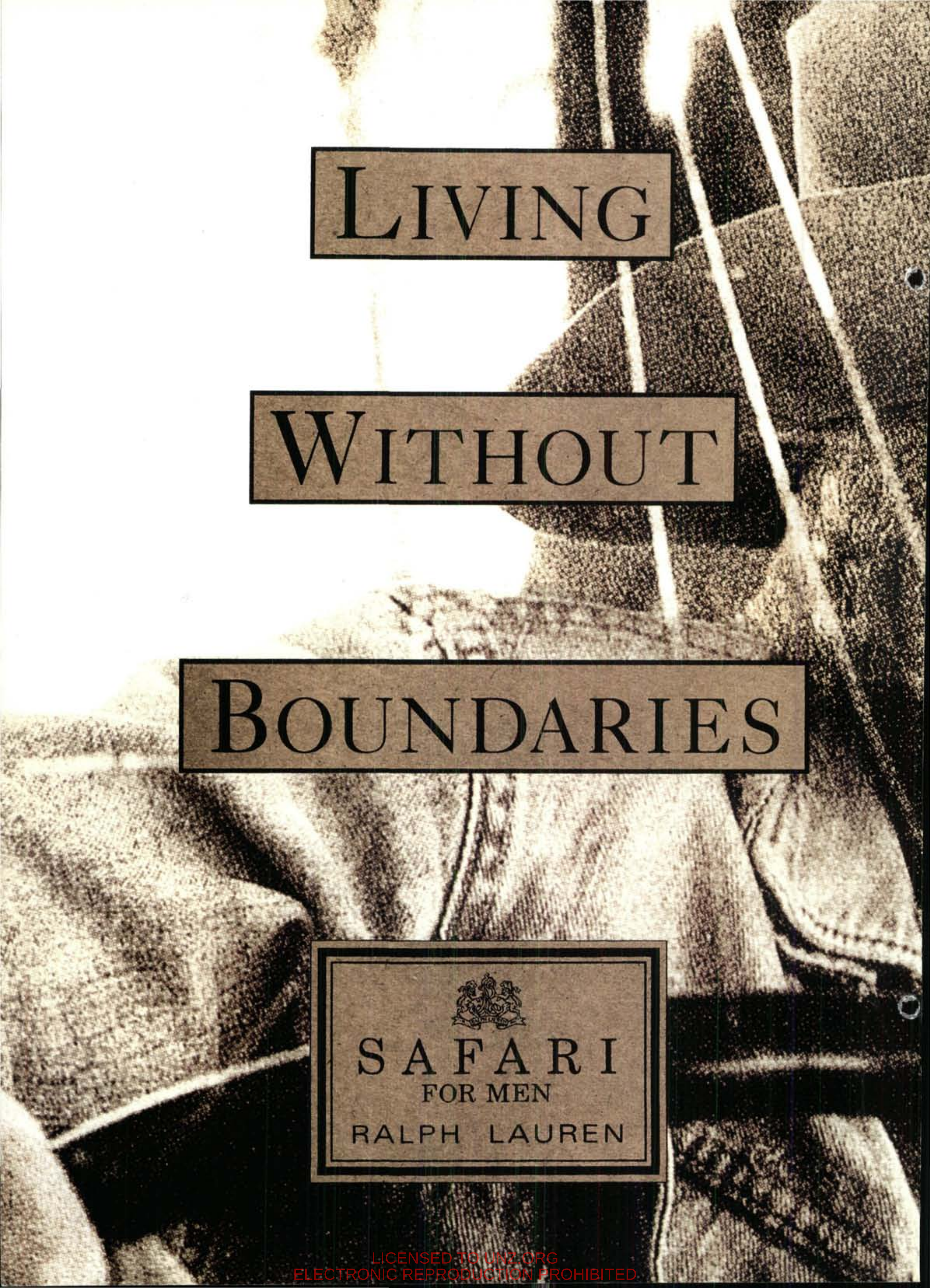
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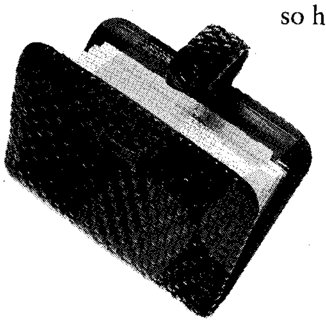
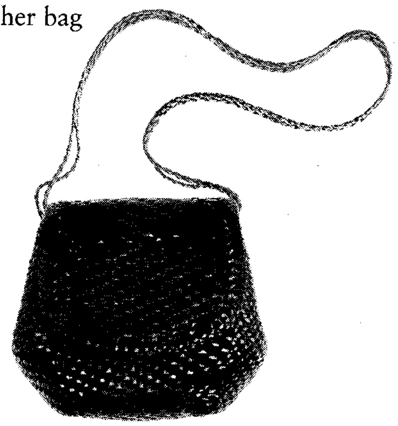
DOUBLE RL RANCH

Ostensibly, it was a business lunch,
so he carried
his agenda



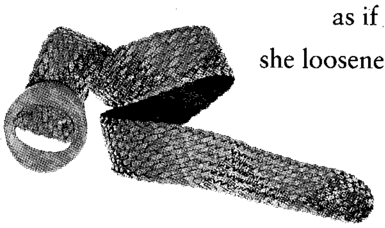
[DEVECCHI WOVEN LEATHER AGENDA]

to endow him with an air of
professionalism. Her lighthearted
entrance put him right at ease.
She bounced into the cafe,
her leather bag



[DEVECCHI WOVEN LEATHER
SHOULDERBAG]

slung jauntily across her body,
and gave him a breathless hello.
After lunch, which passed
as if in a dream,
she loosened her belt



[DEVECCHI WOVEN LEATHER BELT]

one notch, raised an eyebrow,
and surveyed him with a satisfied smile.

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THE NEW YORKER

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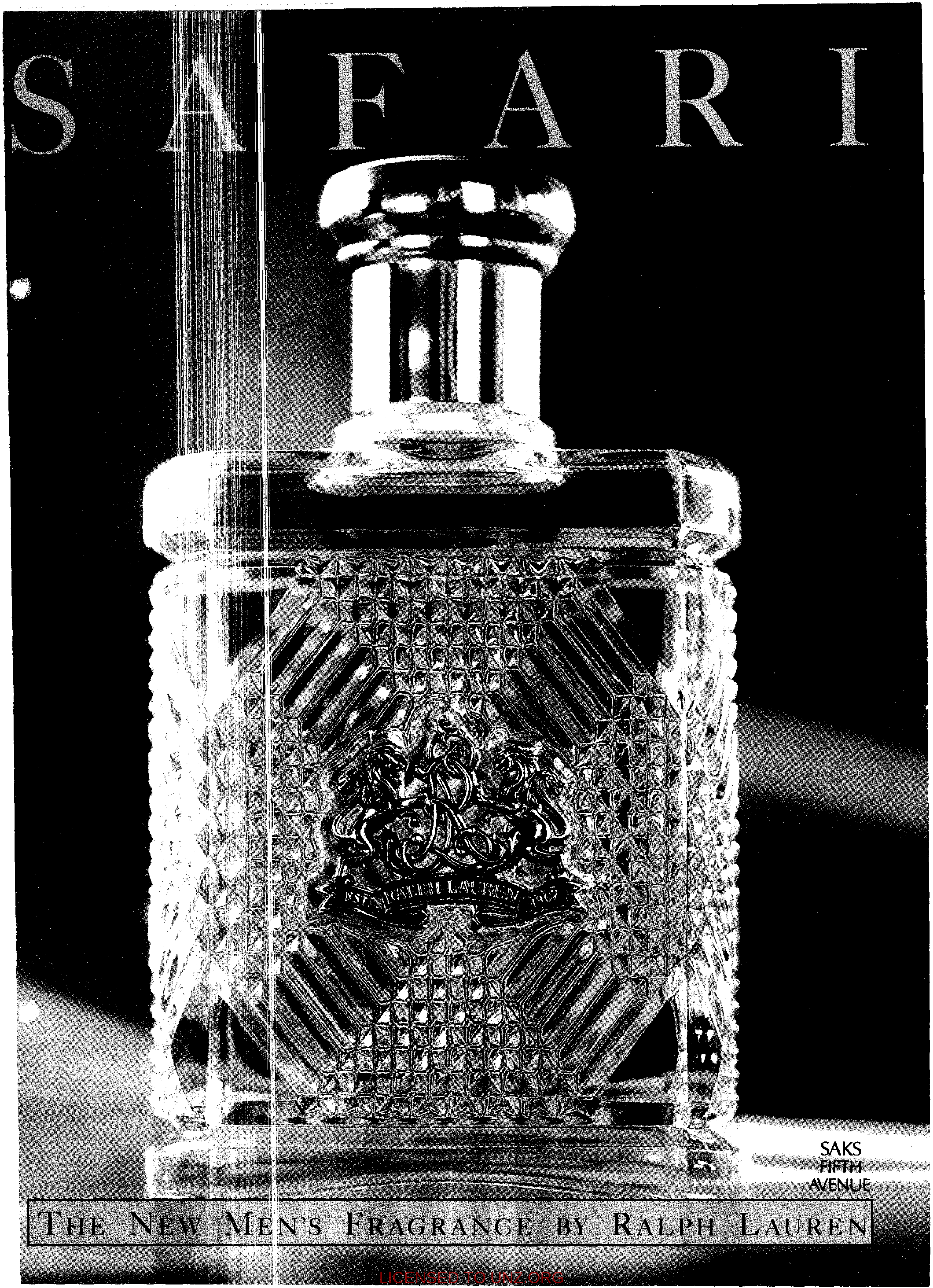
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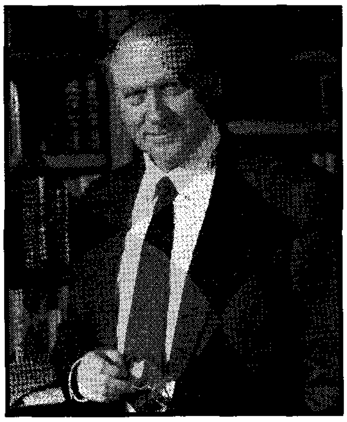
SAKS FIFTH AVENUE
THE NEW MEN'S FRAGRANCE BY RALPH LAUREN

THE FIRST DISSIDENT

PULITZER PRIZE-WINNER WILLIAM SAFIRE TIES THE BOOK OF JOB TO THE NEWS OF TODAY



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—Michael Novak

*Time

RANDOM HOUSE

COMMENT

THE WINNING HAND

ONE of the rituals of American elections, from the humblest aldermanic race to the grand and gaudy Presidential pageant, is for the winner to proclaim that his or her victory is more than a personal or partisan triumph—as, in truth, it almost always is. That ritual was duly enacted late last Tuesday night, when Bill Clinton appeared before a huge, happy throng, in the open air, in front of the Old State House in Little Rock, Arkansas. "I remind you again tonight, my fellow-Americans, that this victory was more than a victory of party," the young champion declared, in a voice made hoarse by a million words. "It was a victory for the people who work hard and play by the rules, a victory for the people who feel left out and left behind and want to do better, a victory for the people who are ready to compete and win in the global economy but who need a government that offers a hand, not a handout." Of course, there are plenty of people who work hard, etc., and voted for George Bush or Ross Perot; but Governor Clinton may be forgiven for hoping that those voters, too, will benefit from his dispensation. The next four years will show whether that hope is to be fulfilled or disappointed. One need not await the consequences of Mr. Clinton's policies, however, to say with certainty that his election was indeed a victory for something larger than his own ambition—namely, politics itself.

Politics—the activity, the profession, the very word—is in bad odor in this country, and has been for at least a generation. The election of Mr. Clinton and his running (and jogging) mate, Senator Al Gore, to the nation's highest offices is a long step toward the rehabilitation of that word and what it stands for. In addition to their youth, their Southern Baptist roots, and their moderate liberalism, the two men share an entirely healthy respect for and love of politics. They obviously view it as a calling, and a noble calling at that—which in a democracy is just what it ought to be, and in this democracy too seldom is. For the incurably gregarious Mr. Clinton, especially, it is also a joyous calling.

In contrast, Mr. Clinton's two opponents shared a more or less open con-

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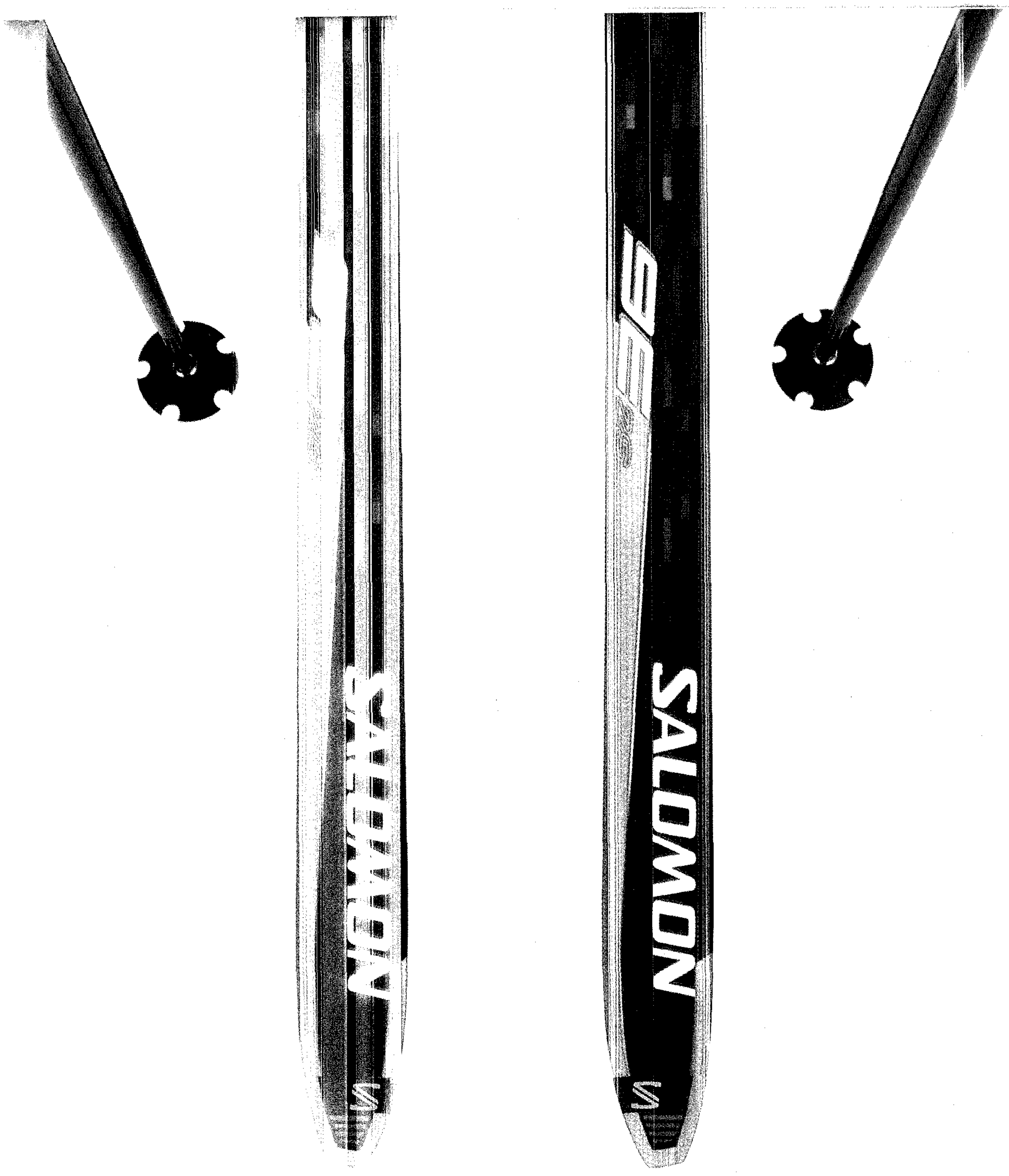

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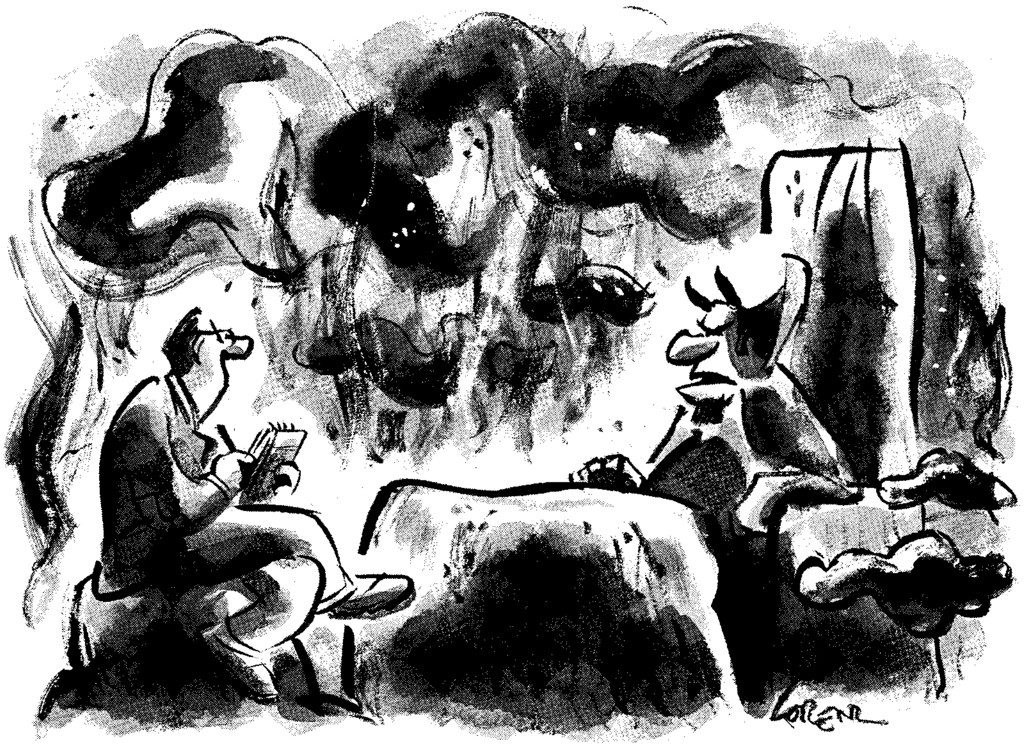
tempt for politics. For Mr. Bush, politics was something one was occasionally obliged to do—a "mode" to be entered for brief periods of frenetic and mostly unpleasant activity. "Campaign mode" was a lower state of being than governing mode, and "full campaign mode" was the lowest and most frenetic of all. Mr. Bush seemed not to see the connection between—indeed, the identity of—politics and self-government. On Election Night, Mr. Clinton paid tribute to Mr. Bush "for his lifetime of public service, for the effort he made from the time he was a young soldier in World War II, to helping to bring about an end to the Cold War, to our victory in the Gulf War, to the grace with which he conceded the results of this election tonight in the finest American tradition." The tribute was deserved. But Mr. Bush's conception of public service was as a kind of being there. It was anything but dynamic or transformative; it was static and custodial—in a word, unpolitical. For him, public service consisted of the application of virtuous character to the wise stewardship of existing institutions. There are places and times to which this conception is adequate, but the Presidency of the United States in a season of economic and social distress is not among them.

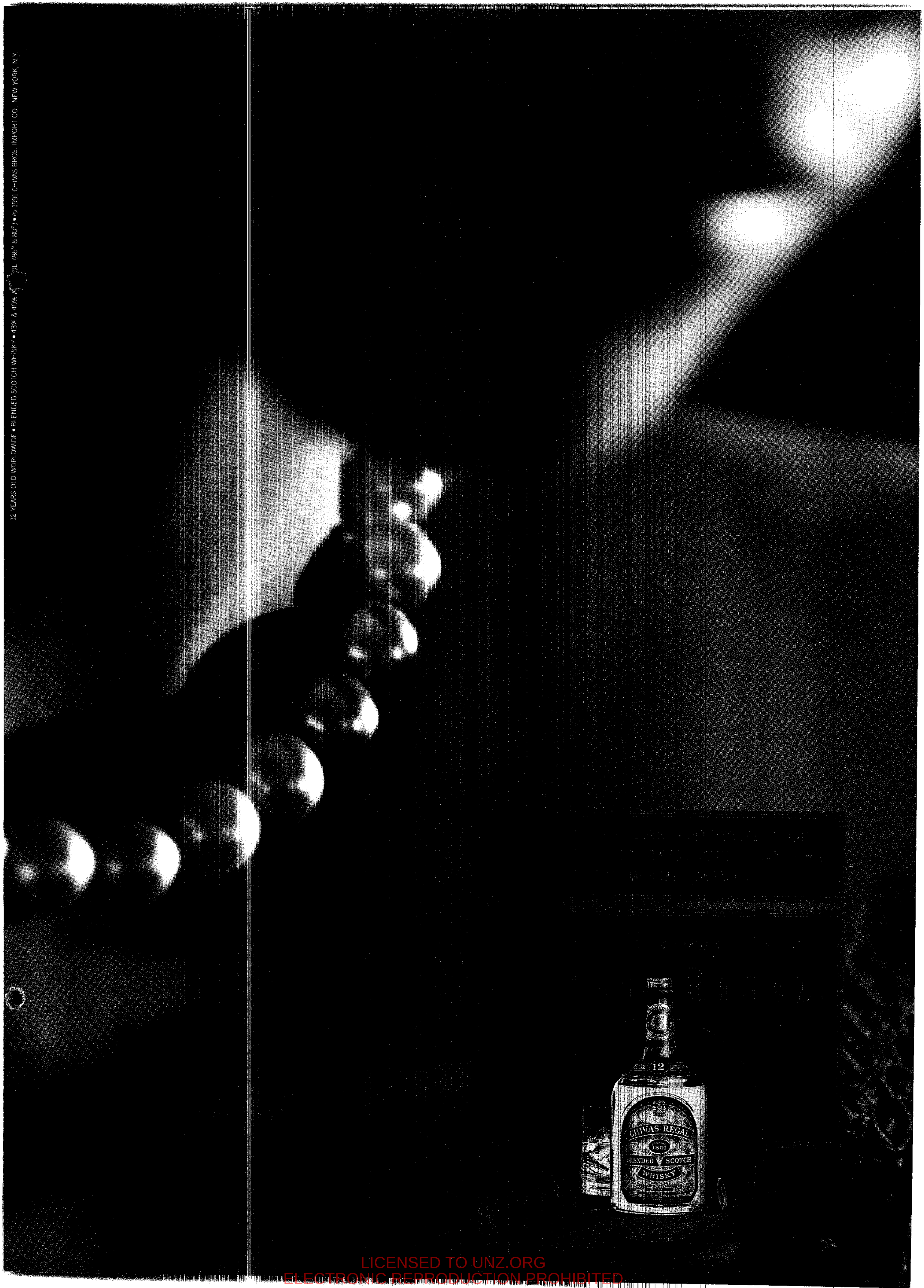
The radical distinction Mr. Bush drew between politics, in which anything goes, and public service, in which a minimal standard of civility, if not of conviction, is essential to self-respect, left him without a moral gyroscope when he was in full campaign mode. Hence his indulgence of bigotry at the Houston Convention, his campaign's despicable suggestion that Mr. Clinton might once have been a Soviet agent, and, in the desperate final days, his extraordinarily vulgar and foolish references to the Democratic candidates as "these two bozos" and to Mr. Gore as "Mr. Ozone." It is encouraging that these tactics were so decisively repudiated by the electorate. One of Jimmy Carter's legacies was a conviction on the part of a generation of politicians that it is political suicide to speak of sacrifice, of complexity, or of limits. One of George Bush's, perhaps, will be a conviction on the part of the next generation that unrelieved, unremitting negativity is the road to electoral ruin. That conviction, like its predecessor, would be a myth (remember, please, how Mr. Bush got to be President in the first place), but it would at least be a salutary one.

As for Ross Perot's contempt for politics, it was far more extreme than Mr. Bush's. He gave no sign of seeing government as anything other than a business that ought properly to be run by an autocratic entrepreneur. He denied that political experience might be relevant to Presidential leadership. And his disdain extended beyond politics as a profession to the whole messy panoply of democratic choice—to the sprawling concatenation of parties, committees, contending interests, press gantlets, caucuses, and primary elections through which Americans invest their prospective leaders with the legitimacy to face the full electorate. Mr. Perot dispensed with all that. In the style of a Latin-American strongman, he sneered at parties and politicians as weak, squabbling, and ineffectual; claimed legitimacy through a mystical communion with the people; and proposed to rule through a series of electronic plebiscites. His campaign was about politics in roughly the sense that the Anti-Saloon League was about conviviality.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Gore understand that politics cannot be and should not be sealed off from government, or suspended while problems are solved by experts, or abolished altogether—that politics is the means by which a democratic society governs itself. Their victory is a hopeful augury, as is the increase in voter turnout, which rose from fifty per cent in 1988 to fifty-five per cent last Tuesday, reversing a general thirty-year decline. But the huge vote for Mr. Perot and the passage of term-limit measures in all fourteen of the states where they were on the ballot shows that for a substantial section of the public the alienation from politics is far from over. That alienation, which has always inhabited the body politic like a low-grade fever, grew acute during the Vietnam and Watergate years; the subsequent period of gridlock, accompanied by assaults on government from the redoubts of government, did nothing to relieve it. A great many people simply see no connection between politics and government, on the one hand, and, on the other, some prospect for improvement in their own lives. Their manifest anger shows that they would like to see such a connection. Forging one will be the principal test of the formidable skills of the new Administration. ♦



"I would have made it big in Heaven if it hadn't been for the policy wonks."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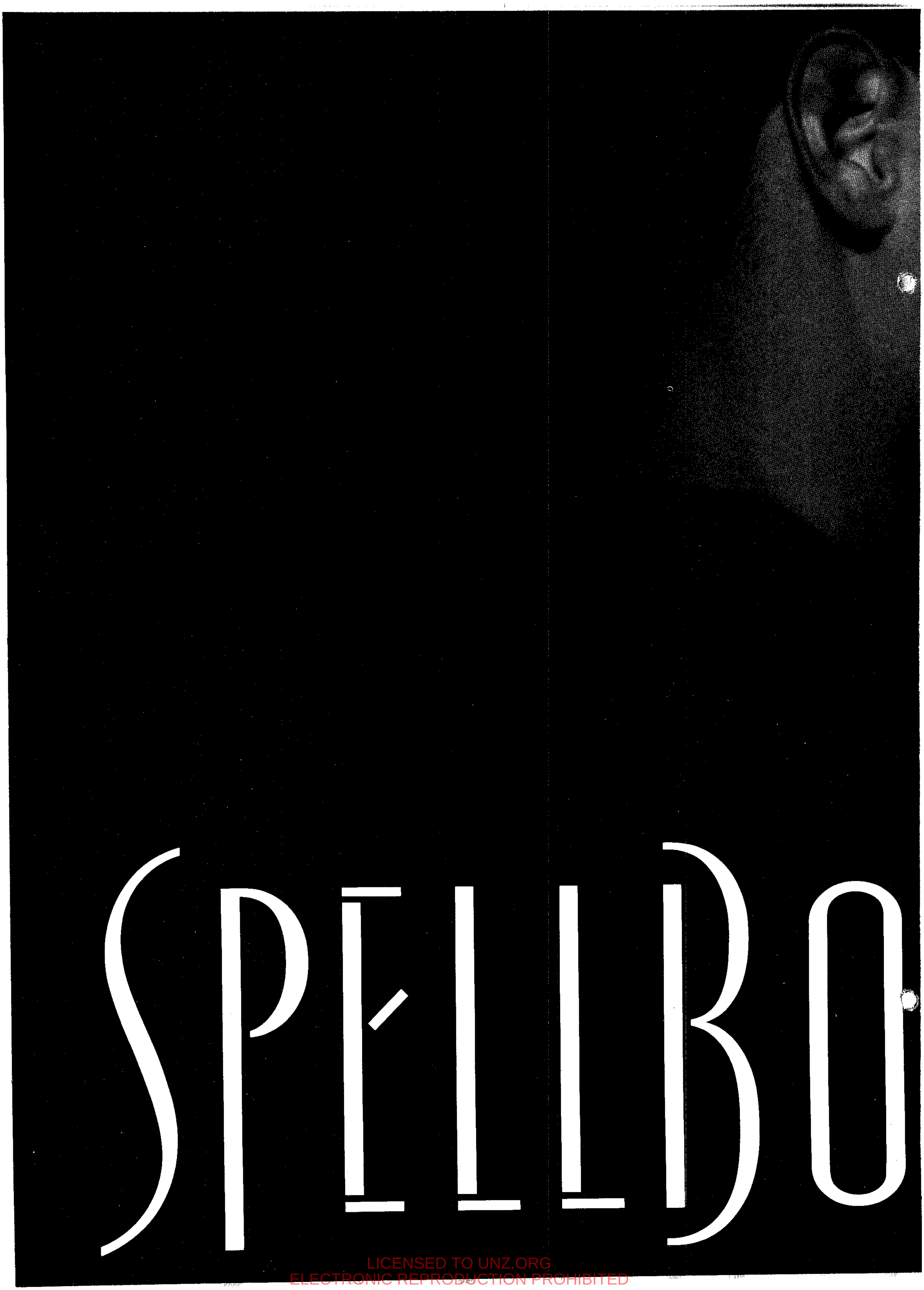
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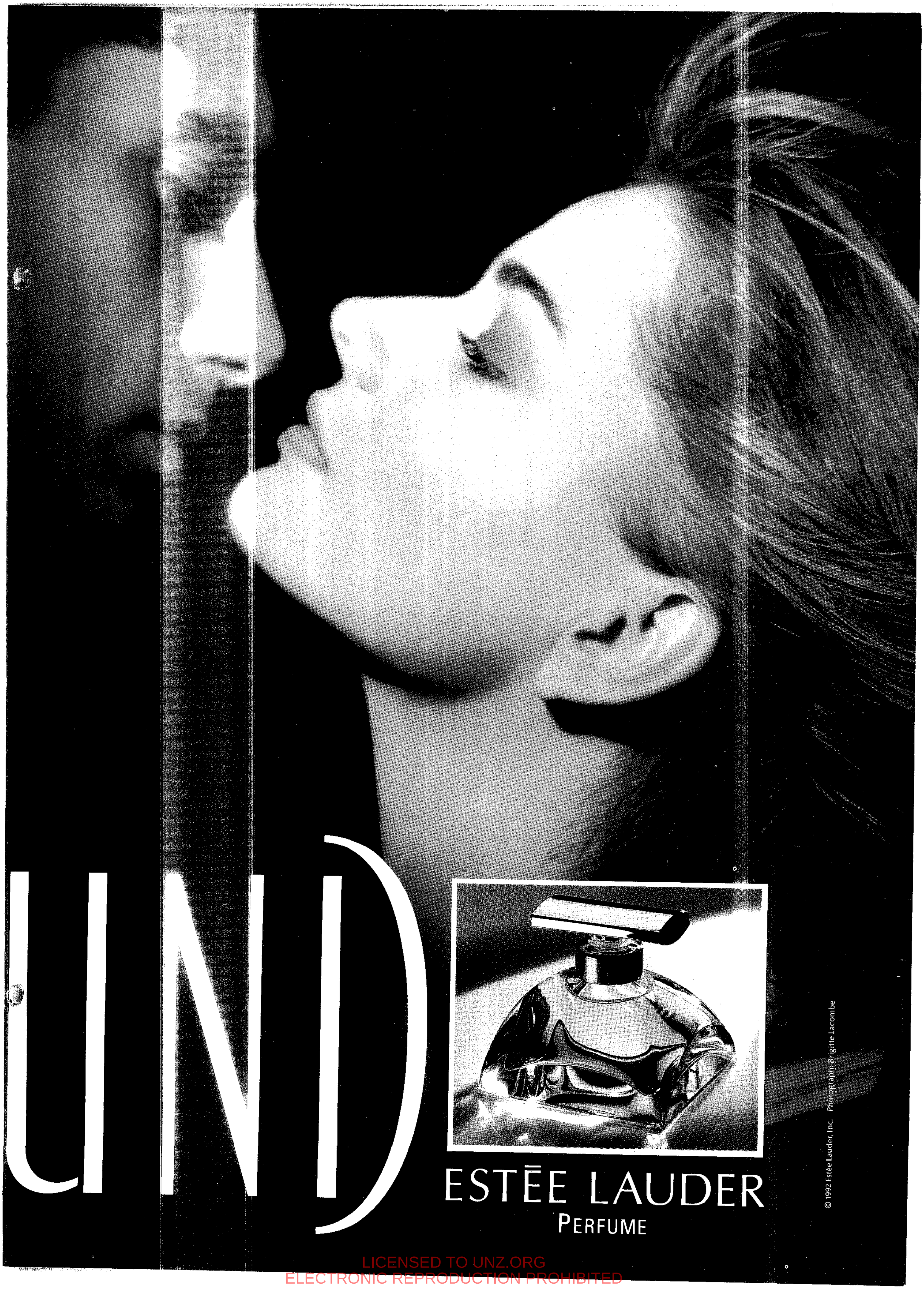

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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15	16	17	18			

THE THEATRE

Shaping Up

FIVE years ago, the California Arts Council asked Rhodessa Jones to teach aerobics to women at a San Francisco jail. Ms. Jones, an actress and playwright, had heard a lot about men in prison—her brother was at Attica, in 1971—but she says that the idea of incarcerated women "was not part of my reality." That situation soon changed: she found herself leading classes with up to forty women, many of whom were coming down off crack binges or screaming for methadone. The sessions soon grew to include "truth or dare" exercises, from which several vivid personalities emerged. "Many of the women had developed sharp wits to survive," Ms. Jones, who is the co-director of the Bay Area theatre group Cultural Odyssey, says. "One of my favorites was Debra. She had been a cabdriver, and a medic in Vietnam; she was arrested for being a cat burglar. That's what she *liked* to do."

From such life stories, Ms. Jones developed "Big Butt Girls, Hard-Headed Women," a series of four monologues, which she is performing at La Mama through November 22. Asked to explain the title, the actress replies, "It partly refers to the fact that in African-American culture, girls at puberty are often admonished with the phrase, 'Don't be so hard-headed. Sit your big butt down.'" The title also refers to one of the many hardships of prison life. "The diet in jail is so bad that if you have a tendency to spread, well, you're going to get *huge.*"

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

A . . . My Name Is Still Alice—A sequel to the 1984 musical revue "A . . . My Name Is Alice." Conceived and directed by Joan Micklin Silver and Julianne Boyd. Previews Nov. 10-11. Opens Nov. 12 at 8. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Joined at the Head—A play by Catherine Butterfield. Previews through Nov. 14. Opens Nov. 15 at 3. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

My Favorite Year—A new musical, based on the movie of the same name, by Joseph Dougherty, Stephen Flaherty, and Lynn Ahrens. Evan Pappas, Tim Curry, and Lainie Kazan have the leads. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

On the Bum—Cynthia Nixon in a comedy by Neal Bell. Previews through Nov. 17. Opens Nov. 18 at 8. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Othello—Clinton Turner Davis has directed this production of Shakespeare's play, which features Raphael Nash in the title role. Previews Nov 10-11. Opens Nov. 12 at 7. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708.)

Program for Murder—A thriller by George W. George and Jeff Travers. Previews through Nov. 16. Opens Nov. 17 at 7. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 982-5800.)

The Seagull—Chekhov's play launches the second season of the National Actors Theatre. With Tyne Daly, Jon Voight, Laura Linney, and Ethan Hawke. Directed by Marshall W. Mason. Previews begin Nov. 17. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

LARA HARWOOD

The Sheik of Avenue B—A Jewish ragtime and jazz-era musical revue conceived and written by Isaiah Sheffer. Previews through Nov. 15 matinée. Opens Nov. 15 at 5:30. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824.)

3 from Brooklyn—A comedy-and-music revue conceived by, written by, and starring Sal Richards. Previews begin Nov. 11. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

Village Light Opera Group—Presenting a brief engagement of **THE GONDOLIERS**, by Gilbert and Sullivan. Opens Nov. 14 at 8, and runs through Nov. 22. (Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. 279-4200.)

Words Divine—The Mexican actress Ofelia Medina stars in a work, by Lorenzo Mans, that is an English-language adaptation of a 1920 play by the Spanish author Ramón del Valle-Inclán. Max Ferra was the director. Previews begin Nov. 11. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 695-6551.)

OPENED RECENTLY

The Best of Forbidden Broadway—This tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's long-running, ever-fluctuating musical revue is, as one might expect, a treat. There is some new material, but the sharpest sequences are still the spoof of "M. Butterfly" and the "Speed-the-Plow" number. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/4/92.) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Big Butt Girls, Hard-Headed Women—Rhodessa Jones' one-woman show. With music and direction by Idris Ackamoor. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Closes Nov. 22.)

Brother Truckers—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company presents a new comedy by Georg Osterman. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

Bubbe Meises, Bubbe Stories—A musical in which a granddaughter recalls her grandmothers and their stories. Written by, and starring, Ellen Gould. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Cambodia Agonistes—A music-theatre work by Ernest Abuba and Louis Stewart, which opens the season for Pan Asian Rep. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes Nov. 28.)

Camp Paradox—A play by Barbara Graham that is set at a girls' camp in 1963. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes Nov. 22.)

Conversations with My Father—If you're looking for a totally satisfying theatrical experience, try the new Herb Gardner, a bittersweet memory play about a Lower East Side barkeep, his two sons, and the patrons of his tavern. Staged by Daniel Sullivan, with a cast led by the wonderful Judd Hirsch. (4/13/92) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Destiny of Me—A new play by Larry Kramer. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Dog Logic—A dark comedy by Thomas Strelich, with Darrell Larson, Lois Smith, Karen Young, and Joe Clancy. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Falsettos—This back-to-back revival of "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland," two of William Finn's three one-act musicals about a childish, self-absorbed man who leaves his wife and son for his not very nice male lover, is strictly for those who care. The appeal of Mr. Finn's trilogy has always been puzzling. It has a chronology as complicated as the Oedipus cycle and a dramatic sensibility akin to that of the Oresteia. But it has always seemed like banality set to music: shallow, unlikable people expressing themselves in shallow, unlikable songs. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Five Guys Named Moe—The guys are black dancers and singers of ability and spirit, who perform the songs (either lyrics or music or both) of the late Louis Jordan. This London import makes a merry evening. (4/20/92) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)—Cherry Jones has the lead in a comedy by Ann-Marie MacDonald. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Nov. 22.)

Guys and Dolls—A lively production of Frank Loesser's perfect musical, under the direction of Jerry Zaks. Adam Arkin and Faith Prince are the leading guy and doll, and Tony Walton designed the stunning scenery. (4/27/92) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Irish Repertory Theatre Company—Two one-man shows, presented in rotating repertory: **JOYICITY**, based on the writings of James Joyce (through Nov. 21), and **FRANKLY BRENDAN**, taken from the works of Brendan Behan and Frank O'Connor (through Nov. 22). (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris—A revival of the musical put together from the works of M. Brel by Eric Blau and Mort Shuman. The show takes a week's hiatus starting Nov. 17; performances resume Nov. 25. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Jelly's Last Jam—The music of Jelly Roll Morton, self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, and, at the same time, an unsparing delineation of Morton himself. The show, an original if there ever was one, was written and directed by George C. Wolfe. In the starring role, Gregory Hines combines his astonishing talents as tap dancer and actor; Savion Glover, who plays the character as a young man, is worthy of him, which is saying a lot. Also

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

present are Keith David, Tonya Pinkins, Wayne Mathis, and Mary Bond Davis. (5/11/92) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Jewish Repertory Theatre—Presenting a revival of **GOD OF VENGEANCE**, Stephen Fife's adaptation of a play by Sholem Asch. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

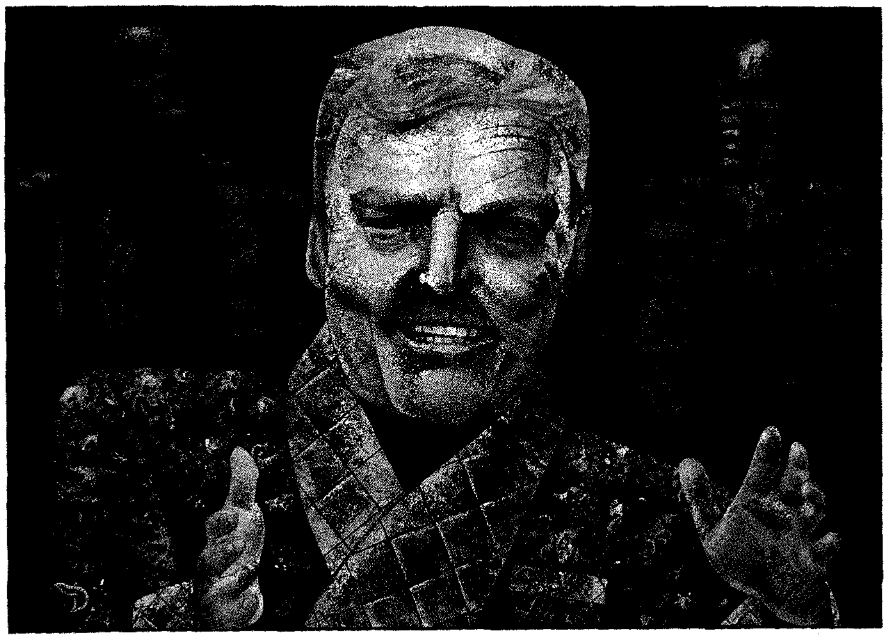
The Lament for Arthur Cleary—Jenny Conroy and David Herlihy in a 1989 play by Dermot Bolger. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318. Closes Nov. 22.)

Mad Forest—A cast of eleven accomplished American actors re-create British playwright Caryl Churchill's examination of the effect *of the fall of the Ceausescu regime on two* Romanian families from different social strata. Repression and resignation feature in equal parts in Churchill's well-researched and well-written drama. Superbly staged by Mark Wing-Davey, who first created the piece in 1990, the production is elegant, minimal, and unforgettable. (10/26/92) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes Nov. 29.)

The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me—A play written and performed by David Drake. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038.)

Nothing Sacred—George F. Walker's version of Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons." (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Closes Nov. 21.)

Oleanna—William H. Macy and Rebecca Pidgeon in a new play by David Mamet. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100.)



Stacy Keach in "Solitary Confinement"

BLAIR DRAWSON

Remembrance—Set in Belfast, Graham Reid's absorbing and often entertaining play tells the story of a man and a woman—he a Protestant and she a Catholic, and both of them widowed and in their sixties—who meet regularly at a cemetery (each there to mourn a son who was a victim of the current "troubles") and who slowly fall in love. They are both beset by grown children who, in different ways, raise hell. The action is a matter of brief scenes, some of them quite funny. Milo O'Shea and Frances Sternhagen can seldom have been better than they are *in the leading roles, and they are* ably supported by Mia Dillon, Caroleen Feeney, John Finn, and Terry Donnelly. Terence Lamude directed. (10/12/92) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077.)

Ruthless!—This camp musical about a monster child star is harmless and amusing enough—assuming you can stomach the little girl. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

The Show-Off—The Roundabout Theatre Company's production of George Kelly's 1924 comedy, with Pat Carroll and Boyd Gaines. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's comedy with serious undertones is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who professionally dispenses advise. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Frances McDormand, and Madeline Kahn, each of whom proves worthy (and then some) of her role. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. (11/2/92) (*Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center.* 239-6200.)

Solitary Confinement—Stacy Keach stars in a thriller by Rupert Holmes. (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 307-4100.)

Spic-O-Rama—John Leguizamo's latest one-man show. (11/9/92) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Texts for Nothing—Bill Irwin in an adaptation of Samuel Beckett's "Texts for Nothing" and "How It Is." Adapted by Joseph Chaikin and Steven Kent. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Nov. 22.)

Three Shouts from a Hill—The O'Casey Theatre Company presents three one-act comedies by Sean O'Casey. Directed by Sivaun O'Casey. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Closes Nov. 14.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **LOST IN YONKERS:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SECRET GARDEN:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.

DANCE

East Meets West

In the past several years, more Russian ballet companies have danced at the War Memorial Theatre in Trenton than at Lincoln Center. Thank Shelley M. Zeiger for that. Mr. Zeiger is a Trenton businessman who happens to trade with Russian craftspeople, and his philosophy is if you can afford twelve hundred dollars for a Gzhel chess set, you can certainly spare sixty bucks for a ticket to see Russian arabesques. When the Bolshoi Theatre Grigorovich Ballet, founded by Yuri Grigorovich, performs in Trenton November 24-25 (for information, call 1-609 394-1000), it won't be bringing the big guns—full-evening works. (The Grigorovich Ballet is not the Bolshoi proper, which is state owned, but, rather, a smaller private touring group.) The program for this tour consists of excerpts from Mr. Grigorovich's "Nutcracker" and from his "Golden Age."

Mr. Grigorovich came up with this program by trying to think American: the group's current tour will occur during the holidays and will be taking in the Sands Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City and Bally's in Las Vegas; since "The Nutcracker" is a Christmas ballet and "The Golden Age" has a scene set in a cabaret, he reasons, they are a perfect match in this season for these venues, both of which will be new to Bolshoi dancers. At press time, a spokesperson for Mr. Zeiger wasn't sure how many dancers would make the trip. But the Trenton auditorium's carpenters are already extending the stage. The house will be prepared for anything.

New York City Ballet—Opening performances of the season, which will run through Feb. 21. Nov. 17 at 7:30: A benefit evening, which will include the only performance of a new pas de deux by Peter Martins. . . . ¶ Nov. 18 at 8: "Divertimento No. 15," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Andantino," and "Mercury." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Yvonne Meier—In "The Shining," a dance/performance installation. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Nov. 9 and Nov. 12-15 at 9 and 11, and Nov. 11 at 9.)

Takarazuka Revue Company—Final performances by an all-female dance troupe from Japan; with guest artist Mizuki Oura. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 11 and Nov. 14 at 2 and 8, Nov. 12-13 at 8, and Nov. 15 at 2.)

Rebecca Kelly Dance—Presenting "Those" and the New York premières of "Drums!," "Undercurrents," and "The Lost Girl." (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Nov. 12 at 8.)

Merián Soto and Pepón Osorio—The choreographer and the visual artist offer "Historias." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Nov. 12-14 at 8 and Nov. 15 at 3. Through Nov. 22.)

American Ballroom Theatre—Opening performances of a two-week engagement, including five New York premières: "The Silver Screen," "Ballroom," "For You," "Latin," and "Swing." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Nov. 17 at 7 and Nov. 18 at 8. Through Nov. 29.)

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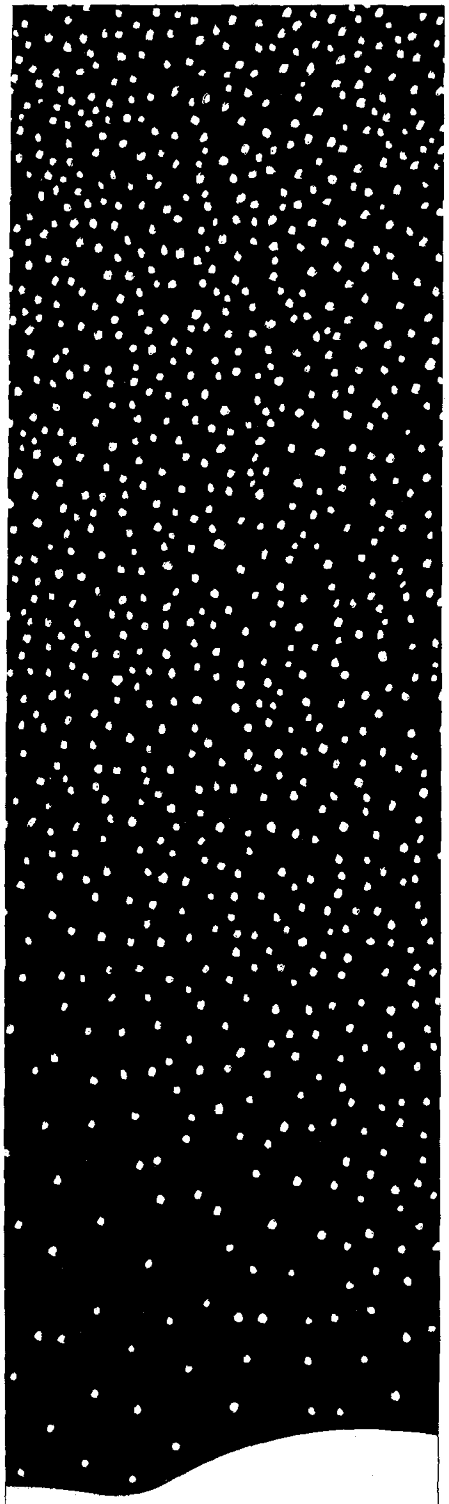

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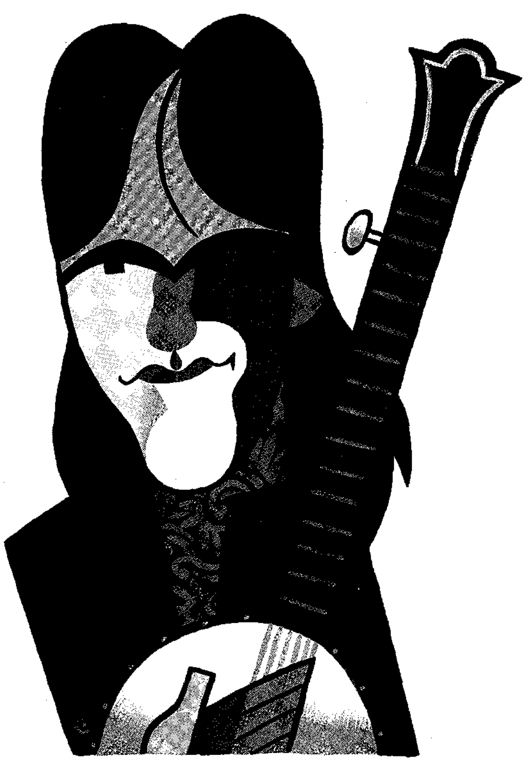

Béla Fleck

DAVID COWLES

How does a New York City kid get turned on to the banjo? Through the "Beverly Hillbillies" theme song, perhaps? The duelling-banjos scene in "Deliverance"? Well, yes, actually. The banjo virtuoso Béla Fleck cites exactly those sources, and without a trace of irony in his voice. "I was just riveted by the sound of the instrument," adds Fleck, who'll be appearing at five different local clubs this week.

Fleck took up the instrument at age fifteen, but rather than hewing to traditional forms he also delved into the kind of music other urban teen-agers were playing: Led Zeppelin, Yes, and Chick Corea, for instance. After moving to Nashville and earning a reputation as a bluegrass whiz, he eventually formed a group, Béla Fleck & the Flecktones, whose music mirrored his wider interests. The band, which has just released its third major-label album, "UFO Tofu," plays a synthesis of jazz, rock, bluegrass, funk, Latin, and other styles.

The band's five-night pub crawl is designed to showcase their versatility. At the Blue Note (November 9), Fleck says, their set will be "a little more straight ahead," at Wetlands (November 10) "a little more rocking," at the Knitting Factory (November 11) "a little more on the edge," at Sounds of Brazil (November 12) "a little more Latin," and at the Lone Star Roadhouse (November 13) "a little more bluegrass." How many bands could handle that itinerary?

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**ANDREA MARCOVICCI** has taken up fall and winter residence in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. For the next couple of weeks, she'll perform a show called "Movies and Other Love Songs." Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—A quirky, endearing Village watering hole, perpetually decorated for the holidays—all of them. The musicians work in the back of the room, in a well ringed by a bar—a setup that seems to bring out the latent show-biz tendencies in some of the bar's patrons. Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy, Fridays and Saturdays to Mabel Godwin, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band. Music from nine-thirty.

A-Train, 318 W. 45th St. (974-0500)—A flashy but comfortable new jazz club that features African/Caribbean food, a Bessie Smith mural, and waitresses in black cocktail dresses. During the early evening, small combos play in the bar area; the main events take place on a stage decorated with a bas-relief of the Manhattan skyline. Show times vary.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool, green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars, as well as the occasional drag queen. The Ballroom is also a tapas restaurant—if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. **BONNIE FRANKLIN** is here through Nov. 15, in Judith Viorst's revue "Love and Shrimp." Brazilian singer-songwriter **GILBERTO GIL** begins a run on Nov. 17. Gil, an influential artist who's been performing for some twenty-five years, recently released a new album, "Parabolic." Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy, two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. Music from nine.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, a gift shop, and, of course, those incredible shrinking aisles that turn a mid-set dash to the rest room into something of a steeplechase. **BÉLA FLECK'S** group comes in on Nov. 9, for a night. **FOURPLAY,** featuring Bob James and Lee Ritenour, is here Nov. 10-15. **KOOL & THE GANG** begin a run on Nov. 17. First set at nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A great, black loft that's jammed with row after row of tables—it looks a little like the site of a standardized test. **SHAWN COLVIN,** who'll be here Nov. 12-13, is a folksinger who came up through the New York clubs in the eighties. Her 1989 début album, which was appealing in a dark, thoughtful way, not only won her a Grammy but placed her among the genre's most closely watched artists. Her followup record, "Fat City," which just came out, lives up to all expectations. Colvin's songwriting, often reminiscent of Joni Mitchell's, is more assured than ever. But Colvin is best seen live, where her self-effacing, slightly giddy stage persona lightens the music a touch. Aside from her own songs, she does a few nicely chosen covers, including a quiet, lovely version of "This Must Be the Place" that will knock the Talking Heads' version clear out of your head, and perhaps Warren Zevon's "Tenderness on the Block," which she sings on her new album. **JEFFREY GAINES** performs on Nov. 14. Gaines, a singer-guitarist-songwriter from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, is an avowed Elvis Costello disciple, though his self-titled début album, released earlier this year, contains hints of the R. & B. singers—Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, and the like—whom he listened to while growing up. Gaines is a serious-minded songwriter, who takes on such sober issues as abortion rights and the responsibilities of parenthood. But there's nothing dogmatic about his approach. He puts across his lean, intelligent songs with as much grace as passion. Show times vary. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar in the heart of N.Y.U. country. It's advisable to get all your talking done between sets, because, once the first chord is struck, the audience here—with a little help from the management—becomes as quiet as a church congregation. **GARY BARTZ, JOHN HICKS,** and **PETER WASHINGTON** are here through Nov. 15. **STEPHEN SCOTT, BEN RILEY,** and **RAY DRUMMOND** get started on Nov. 16. Music from ten. Dining.

CAFÉ SIN-É, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—Don't be misled by the sleepy, hole-in-the-wall atmosphere of this bohemian little Irish café, or by the fact that the place has no stage and no music schedule. While patrons have been writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over their Rolling Rocks, some pretty fine musicians have turned up and tuned up: Sinéad O'Connor, Marianne Faithfull, and Luka Bloom, to name a heady few. Music generally begins at about eight.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and **BOBBY SHORT.** Music Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving: the management has had the good sense not to renovate. In recent years, CB's has become something of an empire; the club is now flanked by a pizzeria/boutique on one side and a bar/performance space on the other—all your shopping needs taken care of in one convenient location. Among the many bands passing through here this week are Laguna Moree (Nov. 11), Pineapple (Nov. 12), and Karen Black (Nov. 14). Music from eight on Sundays and Mondays, from eight-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A long, narrow basement restaurant, where early arrivals grab the private tables and latecomers have to sit mess-hall style. The bar area can get a bit rowdy, but the dining room, with its coves and candlelight and quilted wall hangings, is a fine spot for jazz. Music at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Sundays, with late sets at one on Fridays and Saturdays.

CONTINENTAL CLUB, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (533-0210)—Until recently known as Irving Plaza, the club is home to the Swing Dance Society on Sunday-nights. The dancers span all ages and shoe sizes, but all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Hank Doughty and the Ray Abrams big band are here on Nov. 15. Sets from eight till midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737. The club also hosts rock bands. **WIDESPREAD PANIC** will be here on Nov. 14 and **LOS LOBOS** on Nov. 18. Shows begin at nine-thirty.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, a menu full of items like bangers and mash, and a piano. Knickerbocker is a good-spirited place and, while music often takes a back seat to conversation, able piano-and-bass teams turn up regularly. Music from nine-forty-five.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—Situated in a neighborhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. **BÉLA FLECK'S** group is here on Nov. 11. Nov. 13 belongs to **MARC RIBOT & BAD LUCK,** Nov. 14 to **GARY LUCAS,** and Nov. 15 to Ladonna Smith Transmusic and **TIM BERNE'S** outfit, the Maze. Music after nine.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—It's named for its Texas décor, but perhaps a more apt name would be the Second Chance, since so many lost, forgotten, or faded rockers turn up here. But the club's busy schedule includes a variety of newer acts, too. Jorma Kaukonen performs Nov. 11-12, and **BÉLA FLECK'S** band is here on Nov. 13. Music after nine. Dining.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A plain blue back room whose far wall is decorated with round things: a Frisbee, some singles, a drum head, and the woofer from a speaker cabinet, to name a few. The beer of choice here is Rolling Rock—by a landslide—and the crowd may make you feel as if you have a midterm to study for, but many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **WEEN,** which performs here on Nov. 12, has just released "Pure Guava." The album was recorded in Dean and Gene Ween's home studio, and much of it is pure hole-in-the-head weirdness. In a world in which many bands give us everything but the kitchen sink, Ween gives us only the kitchen sink. A typical song will include two distorted guitars and a fairly lame drum track, on top of which Dean and Gene will rant and rave and joke around—occasionally bursting into laughter, or ending a song with the words "I think it's over." It doesn't exactly sound like a winning formula, but much of "Pure Guava" is inspired. The **LYRES,** a great, raunchy Boston sixties-garage-rock group, is here on Nov. 14. Show times vary.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes—has more of a country-club feel. **VERNEL BAGNERIS,** the creator of the musicals "One Mo' Time" and "Staggerlee," is extending his Jelly Roll Morton tribute for a few more weeks. Supported by pianist Gunnar Larsen, who deftly tackles some of Morton's trickier compositions, Bagneris presents a combination of musical numbers and sketches based on Morton's life. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Closed Sundays.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There, you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here, intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. Two show-biz veterans, **ANN BLYTH** and **BILL HAYES,** are currently offering a show titled "An Elegant Evening of Beautiful Music." Ms. Blyth is a onetime M-G-M star whose best-known role was as Joan Crawford's daughter in "Mildred Pierce"; Mr. Hayes' credits include Broadway musicals, a stint on "Your Show of Shows," and a role in "Days of Our Lives." Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Mondays.

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS**, Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. Show times vary.

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This decaying theatre, once the home of Studio 54, is now the site of one of the city's biggest, oldest, and loudest rock clubs, which was formerly located in the East Village. The club features a broad stage, mobile-home-size speakers, plenty of room to shimmy, and, for the sedentary, a giant Big Brother video screen. **MEGADETH** and **SUICIDAL TENDENCIES** perform Nov. 11-13; **MILTON NASCIMENTO** is here on Nov. 18. Show times vary.

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret, where **JULIE WILSON** can be found Thursdays at nine and Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen. **CHARLOTTE RAE** performs on Nov. 15 at eight and, upon demand, ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut decorated with a fruit-and-bamboo motif and dedicated to such things as calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. S.O.B.'s dance floor is always jumping with Rastas and N.Y.U. students, and there's always someone onstage shouting "Put your hands in the air!" The **OHIO PLAYERS** are here on Nov. 11. These masters of seventies funk and purveyors of titillating album covers have been doing reunion shows of late, but they've lost some of their edge over the years. They're skilled musicians, given to sweaty, spiralling jams. But their shows are a bit too slick. Their renditions of such hits as "Fire" and "Skin Tight" sound perfunctory, and the frequent "Can I hear you say yeah!" exhortations ring hollow. **BÉLA FLECK & THE FLECKTONES** claim Nov. 12. Closed Sundays. Dining.

SUPPER CLUB, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Upstairs at this gilt-railinged, lamé-curtained club is a plush little nook called the Blue Room, which boasts celestial-motif wallpaper and a profusion of deep-sea blue. The racket of midtown can't find you here. Music Tuesdays through Saturdays. Show times vary.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—One seldom sees jazz musicians leaning back to back as they kick out the jams, or craning their necks to harmonize into a mike. That's not to say that they don't interact onstage, but they're usually more subtle about it than rockers are. The nod, the glance, the faint smile are more common gestures, and this brown-toned ski chalet of a jazz club is a fine place to study such group dynamics. Pianist **TOMMY FLANAGAN'S** trio begins a two-week engagement on Nov. 10. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is nine. Dining.

TIME CAFÉ, 380 Lafayette St., at Great Jones St. (533-7000)—In the basement of this sleek and trendy restaurant is an unadorned, windowless midsize room where the **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble, directed by trumpeter **JACK WALRATH** and trombonist **SAM BURTIS**, concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, Charles Mingus. Shows at nine and eleven. Dining.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, located near what was once called the Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The pillared, loftlike room is decorated in a hodgepodge, vaguely Bourbon Street manner, and sight lines are above average. If an appearance here by **GEORGE JONES** (on Nov. 12) makes country fans do a double take, it's understandable. Jones, whose habit of missing performances has earned him the sobriquet No-Show Jones, is especially skittish

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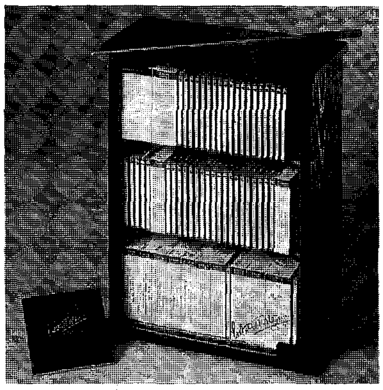

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when it comes to this town, where he hasn't appeared since the seventies. But this country demigod, who has been performing since the fifties, has undergone a rebirth lately, with a new label (MCA) and a new album, "Walls Can Fall." Despite his years of "having a little too much fun," as Randy Travis has described it, Jones' soaring vocal skills—his unique phrasing, remarkable range, and interpretive genius—haven't diminished. And with many of country's Young Turks citing him as a shaping influence, Jones' status has hit a new peak. Music is usually from eight on weeknights and from eight-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." The **ILLINOIS JACQUET** big band holds forth Nov. 10-15. **ROY HARGROVE'S** quintet gets under way on Nov. 17. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays. Music after nine-thirty.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A relatively young club that has already managed to make a scene. Wetlands is usually thought of as a Deadhead hangout, but the club has also been the launching pad for a generation of young New York bands like Blues Traveler and the Spin Doctors. Shows here can be absurdly sweaty and tight—the club seems to have a hard time turning people away—and it can be hard to get a view of the stage. Still, Wetlands is such a maze of a place that there's always some mellow corner to retire to. **BÉLA FLECK'S** band is here on Nov. 10; **WAR** claims Nov. 12-14. Shows from ten.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy, awninged eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and always wondered about. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. **CECIL BRIDGEWATER, ROLAND HANNA**, and **TYRONE BROWN** are in action through Nov. 14; **GENE BERTONCINI** and **MICHAEL MOORE** work out together starting on Nov. 16. Music from eight every night but Sundays, when sets begin at seven-thirty.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Next Wave Festival—Nov. 10 at 7 and Nov. 12-14 at 8: David Rousseve's new dance-theatre work, "Urban Scenes/Creole Dreams," performed by his company, Reality. With musical accompaniment from B. J. Crosby and the Lavender Light Gospel Choir. (Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100.). . . ¶ Nov. 13-14 at 8: "Glass Reflections." See Brooklyn Philharmonic in Music listings. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. The festival continues through Dec. 27.)

Big Apple Circus—Featuring the flying Egorov Troupe, from Russia; a contortionist named Tunga, from Mongolia; Johnny Peers and his dog act; equestrienne Katja Schumann; and a host of others. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. Through Jan. 10. For information about show times and tickets, call 268-0055.)

Penny Arcade—In "Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!" With the works: go-go dancers, nudity, explicit language, and pornographic images. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 982-9292. Fridays and Saturdays at 8.)

"Walk of Fame"—A work with text and music by Daniel Zippi, film segments by Anthony Chase, and sets by Janie Geiser. (Downtown Art Co., 64 E. 4th St. 732-1227. Nov. 11-14 at 8 and Nov. 15 at 5.)

"The Circle Unbroken Is a Hard Bop"—An "epistolary praise poem" by Sekou Sundiata and Craig S. Harris. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Nov. 12-15 at 7:30. Through Nov. 29.)

"Typhoid Mary 911"—A performance piece featuring Iris Rose, Joshua Fried, and Gary Ray. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Nov. 12-14 at 10.)

ART

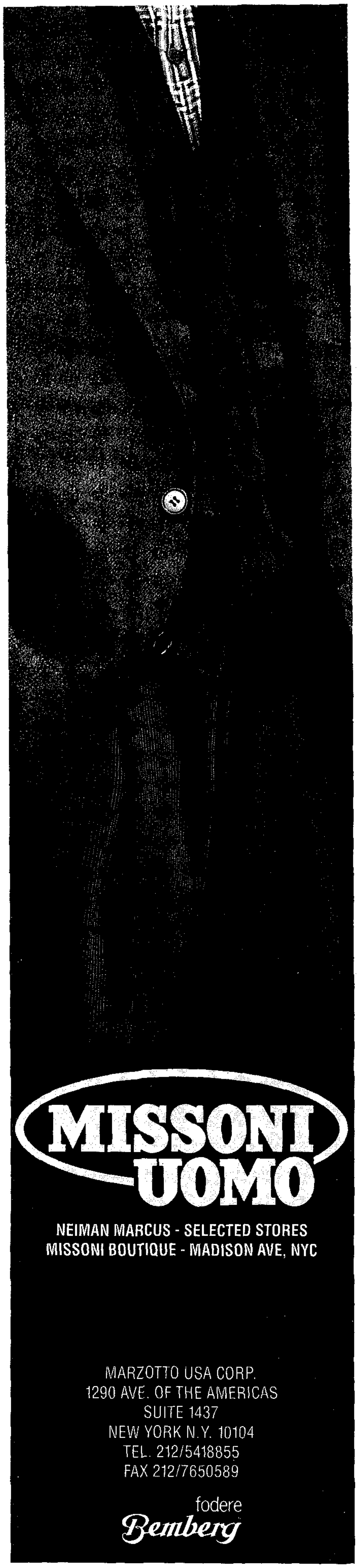
Mother Nature

WITH her current exhibition of recent works (Thorp, 103 Prince Street; through November 14), April Gornik lights anew the wistful torch of nineteenth-century American landscape painting—the Shangri-La school of art. Gornik's venerable predecessors—the Luminist Martin Johnson Meade, for instance, or the maverick Albert Pinkham Ryder—belonged to a generation that saw itself as a new elect. These assorted city dwellers and country gentlemen were among the last artists to know true wilderness, and among the first to envision its end, and they were able to convey the fatalistic grandeur that tends to accompany this sort of insight.

Gornik, of course, does not strike the solemn attitudes of these artists of the Romantic frontier. Her meteorological tableaux, in which weather is poised perpetually on the verge or in the wake of some climactic event, are more or less imaginary, and they are neither sentimental nor sarcastic, although the artist clearly has some high-minded fun with cloud formations and flood conditions. This is Gornik's best work in ten years. A subtle surrealism is again in evidence, in paintings that are far more adventurously composed than before, and she is flirting with a heightened, almost Mannerist palette. Despite their precise realist technique, these paintings look wide open and fresh, and seem to have something in common with sixties color-field work by Poons and Noland. There's a classical chill to them—Gornik seems to view all nature as potential topiary—but also pale fire.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The Magritte retrospective is blandly overhung, and this has the undesirable effect of further homogenizing work by an artist who camouflaged his subversiveness with bourgeois-Belgian-looking effects. Still, the show must be seen. Magritte's not-so-latent Conceptualism, and his famous pictorial incongruities, have had an unsurpassed impact on world graphics, not to mention on a long list of recently influential artists, such as his countryman Marcel Broodthaers, who regarded him as a perverse father figure. Magritte's short-lived Vache period of the nineteen-forties, during which he suddenly began imitating Renoir, Japanese-inspired Impressionist prints, and various cartoon genres, is perhaps the most radical stylistic departure in twentieth-century art, anticipating Sigmar Polke as well as virtually all nineteen-eighties appropriation art. Through Nov. 22. . . . ¶ This museum has jumped into the Jean-Michel Basquiat fray with a display (running concurrently with the Whitney retrospective) of two huge murals that Basquiat made, in 1985, for the Mike Todd Room, at the Palladium. They should lend drama and focus to the artist's cause. . . . ¶ Part 1 of "The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang" focusses on the Ming-dynasty artist's revolutionary movement away from representation and toward abstraction. Seventy-four works by Tung are juxtaposed with works by his contemporaries. Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ The



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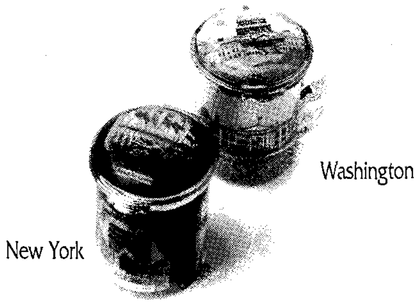

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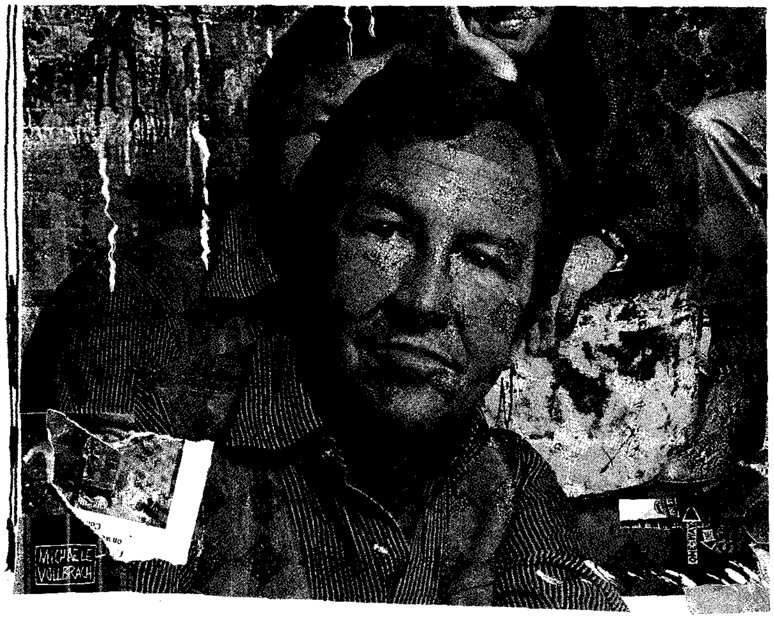
ART–Cont'd

show of paintings, drawings, and sculpture from the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille, includes works by Rubens, Goya, Delacroix, van Gogh, Fra Bartolommeo, and others. Through Jan. 17. . . . ¶ A retrospective of paintings, drawings, and prints by the Spanish realist Jusepe de Ribera (1591-1652). Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ Color photographs by Leo Rubinfien, taken in Japan, China, and Southeast Asia. Through Jan. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—The Matisse retrospective is organized into seven sections that are at once chronological and thematic. The most powerful section, over all, is the one covering the years 1913 to 1917, which is called "Abstraction and Experimentation." A big, subdued, rigorous Jungian masterpiece called "Bathers by a River" (completed in 1916), for instance, from the Art Institute of Chicago, is the great coup de theatre of this rich but surprisingly unrevealing exhibition. There are, however, some happy rediscoveries, such as a number of Matisse's exercises in bold contours and high style from the early forties—paintings like "The Rumanian Blouse," which may have inspired a collection or two by Saint Laurent, and several still-lifes and interiors with figures against black gridded grounds. Some of the great late cutouts are disappointing. In fact, this exhibition doesn't begin or end with a bang. Through Jan. 12. (Plan wisely; call 708-9850 for ticket information. Tickets can be purchased in advance, and a limited number of same-day tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis.). . . ¶ Since many of the museum's major works are on reciprocal loan to other museums in exchange for Matisses, the museum has chosen to reinstall a number of its remaining paintings, sculptures, and other objects in a nonchronological fashion. There are several informative passages, such as Picasso's sexually charged "Demoiselles" and de Kooning's fierce "Woman I" displayed next to Louise Bourgeois' defiant, ironically erect "Sleeping Figure." Likewise, there is a welcome mixing of mediums, such as Bellmer's "La Poupée," a book with surrealistic pictures of body parts, displayed beside a realistic Robert Gober leg. Still, many of the juxtapositions are far less revealing than they were presumably intended to be. . . . ¶ The "New Photography" series has expanded to four galleries, and this eighth installment includes eight artists: Dieter Appelt, Ellen Brooks, Darrel Ellis, Dennis Farber, Robert Flynt, Mary Miss, Gundula Schulze, and Toshio Shibata. Through Jan. 12. . . . ¶ Two series of color and black-and-white photographs by Suzanne Lafont. Through Nov. 15. (Museum hours through Jan. 12: open Sundays through Tuesdays, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Wednesdays, 12 to 6; Thursdays, 10:30 to 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915-32." This large exhibition is an extraordinary—and extraordinarily frustrating—effort. It suggests artists' endless aesthetic disagreements, as well as the perpetual struggle between the élitism of the plastic arts and the populism of the applied arts. This legendary period is evoked with experimental paintings of every level of quality, with a tantalizing variety of revolutionary posters, textiles, and porcelains, and with several superb architectural drawings and models. Other noteworthy—and less familiar—works include the captivating constructivo-figurative paintings of Anna Leporskaia, Il'ia Chashnik's delicate Suprematist watercolors, a pair of severe Nikolai Suetins on plywood, and Georgii Zel'ma's photographs of ethnic revolutionaries. The spirit of Tatlin is everywhere here, though his work is almost nowhere to be seen. Through Jan. 3. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—A show of works that Robert Rauschenberg made between 1949 and 1954, before the appearance of the groundbreaking "combines." As a young man in New York, at North Carolina's Black Mountain College, and in Europe and North Africa, where he travelled for seven months with his friend Cy Twombly, Rauschenberg was already trying almost everything: painting, sculpture, collage, and photography, of course, but also Conceptual art works *avant la lettre* and all sorts of experiments in mediums ranging from newsprint to blueprints. His work has influenced many artists of his own generation (Warhol, Johns) and of the two that have arisen since (Rosenquist; David Salle and Cady Noland). Through Jan. 24. . . . ¶ "Marc Chagall and the Jewish Theatre." Chagall's murals for the State Jewish Chamber Theatre, in Moscow, are in many ways ambitious, but they are not especially satisfying. They are notable for their delicacy, for their mixture of figurative and abstract



MICHAELE VOLLBRACH

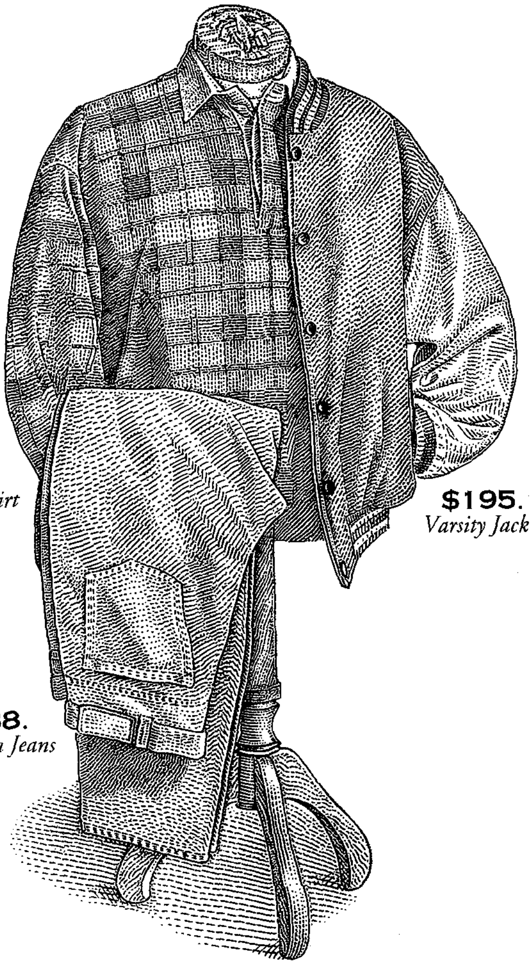
Robert Rauschenberg at the Guggenheim Museum SoHo forms, and for the essentially modest scale of their elements. Through Jan. 17. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings until 10.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Agnes Martin didn't achieve her mature style until the early sixties, when she was in her late forties. Today, she is one of the great living painters, yet her extraordinarily beautiful work is so unassuming that she has not attracted the sort of cultish attention given to her fellow desert escapee Georgia O'Keeffe. It is the paradox of Martin's career that she has made soft, delicate paintings in a rigid grid format. Within her narrow vocabulary, Martin explores infinite variation. Though each painting is a perfect distillation of her œuvre, the more you see, the more you want to see. Through Jan. 31. . . . ¶ From the first appearances, in 1979, of his quizzical SAMO verses on lower Manhattan walls, to his death, in 1988, at the age of twenty-seven, Jean-Michel Basquiat was not only a star of the force-of-nature variety but also a blaze of conflicting energies, dark and light. After he died, the myth machines went into overdrive. There is, for instance, the tabloid notion that this artist, with his Twomblyesque Latin fragments and his cryptic quasi-haiku, was a wild child of the streets. There's the fancier notion that Basquiat had somehow lost it toward the end—just when he was starting to make more classically abstract paintings. Basquiat's opus is full of crowned black figures and names like Joe Louis and Charlie Parker: the issue of race has not made critical tangles any easier to sort out. But as the poet Rene Ricard says in his catalogue essay for the Basquiat retrospective here, "Jean was aware of himself from the get-go as a historical figure. The mechanical listing of other famous people was a shamanistic trick to deceive Clio into slipping him in with the rest. This is not as easy as it sounds. The muse of history is a cunning white woman who jealously guards her books against penetration by blacks." Through Feb. 14. . . . ¶ Drawings from the forties by Alfonso Ossorio (1916-90). Through Nov. 29. . . . ¶ A large exhibition of twentieth-century figurative paintings and sculptures from the collection. Through Nov. 29. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Max Weber: The Cubist Decade, 1910-20." Fifty paintings and works on paper by the American modernist. Starts Nov. 13. . . . ¶ Had he survived the Franco-Prussian War, Frédéric Bazille (1841-70) might have held his own with the Impressionists of his generation. This show of sixty-one paintings and works on paper includes most of his oeuvre. Starts Nov. 13. . . . ¶ "Dame of the Narrows" (1976), a large-scale sculpture of the Staten Island ferry arriving at the Manhattan terminal, is currently installed in the lobby. It's a collaboration between two artists, Red Grooms and Mimi Gross, and the Ruckus Construction Company, a team of artists and engineers. You can go aboard the structure, and, once you're there, the boat starts rocking, waves rise, and seagulls above go crazy. For this installation, Mr. Grooms has also made two large murals depicting the Brooklyn, Manhattan, and New Jersey skylines. . . . ¶ Meg Webster's installation, titled "Running," consists of a stream of water and an adjacent resource room with a computer and books on ecology. Through Jan. 3. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, Broadway at 155th St.—The annual purchase exhibition this year contains paintings, drawings, and prints by sixty contemporary artists, including April Gornik, Alfred Leslie, Howardena Pindell, and Michelle Stuart. Through Dec. 6. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—A new permanent installation of blue-and-white Chinese



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ART—Cont'd

porcelain from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth is on view in the reception hall. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays and Nov. 11, from 1 to 6.)

Jewish Museum, at the New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain." More than a hundred manuscripts, textiles, ceramics, and architectural fragments are on view. Through Dec. 20. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, except Nov. 11, and Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, 11 to 8; Fridays, 11 to 3.)

P.S. 1 Museum, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City—"Postcards from Alphaville: Jean-Luc Godard in Contemporary Art, 1963-92." This show (which runs concurrently with the Godard film-and-video retrospective at MOMA) explores the avant-gardist's influence on artists from Barbara Bloom and Donald Baechler to Allan Ruppersberg and Mary Weatherford. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ In "7 Rooms / 7 Shows" the Institute for Contemporary Art's traditional emphasis on emerging artists shifts to emerging curators. The whole second floor thus becomes the site for seven distinct group shows. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ A new series of photographs by Clegg & Guttmann titled "From the Index of Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Photographic Portraits." Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ "The Bells," Donald Lipski's new sculpture-with-sound installation. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ Three sound-and-video installations by Berlin artists Hans-Peter Kuhn, Ulrich Eller, and Niko Tenten. Through Jan. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Ellsworth Kelly—Kelly, a supreme abstractionist, is also one of the best things ever to have happened to the plant kingdom: his botanical sketches are truly exquisite—as piercingly simple, crystalline, and intense as his nonobjective paintings. Ruskin's advice to young Pre-Raphaelites—to look at the world as if through lidless eyes—could plausibly have been the credo of this sixty-nine-year-old Yankee literalist. The poet John Ashbery, Kelly's neighbor in the Hudson River Valley, wrote the catalogue essay. Through Nov. 28. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Short List—**fernando botero,** Weintraub, 988 Madison Ave., at 77th St. (through Nov. 28); **richard diebenkorn,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through Jan. 9); **jan matulka** and **vaclav vytlacil,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through Nov. 14).

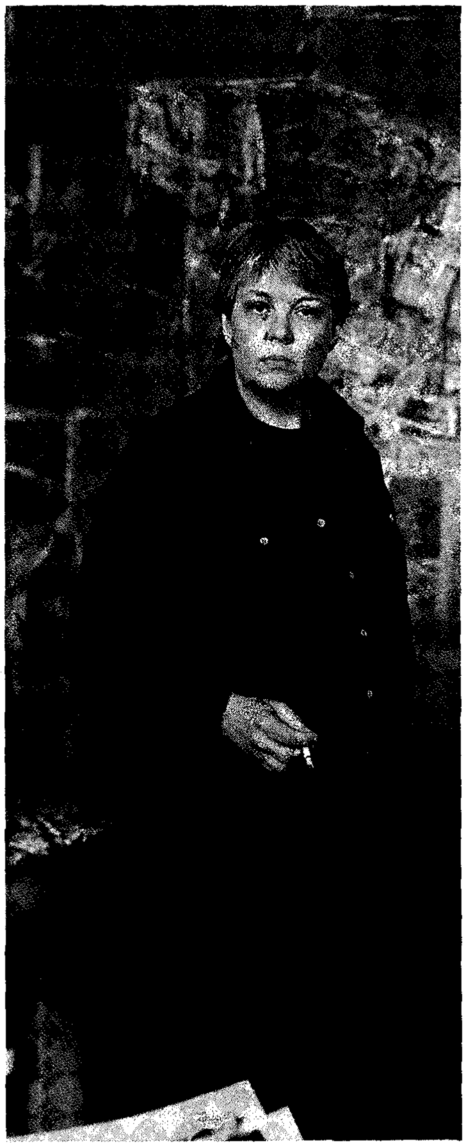
GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Robert Kushner—Kushner's work is getting lusher and more assured. He's still painting flowers, but they're less brash now, and more reflective. The same energy that the artist used to pour into his costumes is now being devoted to his flowers—voluptuous, spiky, hatlike things. The exhibition centers on some very Japanese paintings of the four seasons, but the big surprise here is a group of uncommonly small paintings packed with fancy. Kushner, the perennial kid, has become an oil painter! Through Nov. 14. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Short List—**ariane r. berman,** Gallery 84, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 14); **deborah brown,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 1); **joan brown,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 14); **thomas eakins,** Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Dec. 5); **grace hartigan,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 28); **louise nevelson,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 28); **jackson pollock,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 28); **peter poskas,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (opens Saturdays at noon, through Nov. 28); **sylvia sleigh,** Stiebel, 32 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 14); **george tooker,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through Dec. 5); **tom wesselmann,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays through Nov. 14).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Terry Adkins—This artist puts a sensitive spin on the reclaimed-refuse school of sculpture. A diverse series called "Perpetual Choir" is made of the battered insides of musical instruments, but they make references to churches, ships, and other icons of African-American history. An installation work about Haiti is attractive, if generic. Through Nov. 14. (LedisFlam, 584 Broadway.)



Photographer Jan Groover

COURTESY TINA BARNEY AND ROBERT MILLER GALLERY; DETAIL

Tony Berlant—The merry tinker of California, working on the mystical edges of Pop, has been hammering Westermannian collages and houses out of tin trays, signs, cans, etc., for more than two decades. This is a top-notch show of new works. The houses, his most characteristic form, have a production-line feel to them, but the collages, a number of which are very large, are luscious. They are assembled from bits and pieces of discarded food containers hammered in place with hundreds of brads. By far the most appealing is a collaborative work consisting of narrative panels painted by commercial sign painters in the Texas-Mexico border town of Juarez; each is an interpretation of a different instance in which Berlant got in trouble with the cops. Through Nov. 14. (Louver, 130 Prince St.)

Robert Bordo—Thoughtful, decorative, contemplative paintings based on maps. Straight-faced, the artist plays all sorts of games with layering and pattern techniques, demonstrating in the process various paradoxes of sameness and difference. Through Nov. 14. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Nancy Dwyer—Many artists do clever things with words, such as producing dramatic twists in meaning with a slight change of spelling. Dwyer is one of the most successful at it—at their best, her deceptively simple word sculptures have an uncanny ability to get to the heart of edgy matters. In a funny and pungent piece about narcissism and aggression, a row of four barbells on an examination table spells "Evil" on one side and "Twin" on the other. In a room by itself, installed on a carpet of sod, there is a piece for outdoor display. Titled "Lawn Ornament," it consists of the letters "S" and "E" on pedestals, with a fallen "X" beside them. Through Nov. 28. (Baer, 476 Broome St.)

Christian Eckart—Paintings derived from video images of tattoos, drag-racing accidents, and "two-girl sex." The works were conceived four years ago. What is surprising is not that they tediously rework territory more adroitly explored by other artists but that after four years of reflection the artist still thought it necessary to see them through. Through Nov. 18. (RubinSpangle, 395 West Broadway.)

Stephen Ellis—This painter has an exceptional sense of light, as if he had spent his life staring into flames. These sumptuous paintings are made of grids overlaid with swirling gestural forms, and they seem to represent the artist's omnibus anger at all the binary oppositions of existence—free will vs. determinism, spirit vs. matter, and the like. Through Nov. 14. (Koury, 89 Greene St.)

Heide Fasnacht—More map action. This artist, once known for her abstract wood sculptures, dramatically shifted gears a few years ago and began producing sculptural objects of more pressing content. In one of several depictions of the Great Lakes, Fasnacht seems to be mourning the death of the Midwestern industrial base. The water forms are cut out of fluffy cotton batting and placed incongruously underneath the southern tip of South America. In another work, stuffed animals are suspended from the Great Lakes by hooks and string. Her heart may be in the right place, but these works are at times shamelessly and pointlessly derivative of Oldenburg and Nauman. Through Nov. 14. (Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway.)

Lawrence Gipe—Drawings, paintings, banners, and videos, collectively titled "The Century of Progress Museum." With these works, Gipe attempts ironic statements about the triumph of industry, but, at best, they resemble worker-motivation materials from the thirties and forties. Through Nov. 21. (Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St.)

Alix Pearlstein—A diverting show of amusing, intentionally fragile art works—a piece of string suspended from the ceiling and pinned to the floor by a life-size plastic finger, for example, and a tree branch held in place by the leashes of three toy dachshunds. But the works' themes—annoyance, temptation, rote behavior—are more pointed. Perhaps the most penetrating work is a videotape of a mechanical dog, in all sorts of settings, juxtaposed with people imitating it. At first, the monkey-see, monkey-do routine seems simply silly, but over time it develops a weird sexual momentum. Through Nov. 14. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

A. R. Penck—A mini-survey of works on paper, from 1977 to the present, by this Neo-Expressionist. It includes many of the stick-figure works for which Penck is best known, but it begins with far more realistic works—group portraits of friends—which show the often overlooked personal roots of his later symbol system. Through Nov. 28. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

Alexis Rockman—The centerpiece here is a twenty-four-foot painting filled with hundreds of hybrid animal species that are posed, in a swamp, as if for a class portrait. In scale and sheer profusion of imagery, Rockman is reckoning with the universal tableaux of the grand moralist Bosch. Through Nov. 28. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

Jaune Quick-To-See Smith—A rather weak group of paintings titled "The Quincentenary Non-Celebration." Each consists of a large image meaningful to Native Americans—a canoe, a horse, a map, for example—in the center of a collaged field that includes newspaper clippings about the plight of Indians. Through Nov. 14. (Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St.)

Michelle Stuart—A show of stirringly beautiful books and large paintings-on-paper from the seventies. The scroll-like, unframed paintings were made by infusing the paper with earth from various spiritually significant locations, such as Mesa Verde, in Colorado, and the Great Serpent Mound, in Ohio. The artist then distressed the surfaces with rocks. The passage of two decades has not diminished their contemporaneity. Through Nov. 14. (Fawbush, 76 Grand St.)

Lauren Szold—This artist has managed to make a truly disgusting installation work: a path of squishy salt mounds surrounded by sludge. In the somewhat more picturesque work in the main gallery, she has poured a pancake batter of sorts directly on the floor, concocting islands around which the viewer must maneuver carefully. To each of these she has added some red food coloring—a touch of beauty and violence—and, approximately in the center, a large area of egg yolk, which over time should ensure a truly fragrant odor. Through Nov. 14. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

TODT—There was once something interesting about this collective's Transylvanian science projects gone ballistic. But the thread seems to have been lost, and the new sculptures and objects on view here are merely creepy. They're also too often undermined by the slickness of their workmanship. Through Nov. 14. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

Christopher Wool—Wool has always been crafty, but his method of working is so limited that he has often risked being the only big fish in a very small pond. His last show, which consisted of his familiar stencilled words, explosively expressed the moment's desperation, but in these new paintings he is merely repeating past successes. The exception is a painting that reads, "Fuck em if they can't take a joke." It resonates with all sorts of ironies—perhaps even some that are self-critical. Through Nov. 14. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

Short List—**Massimo Antonaci** and **Sol LeWitt**, Weber, 142 Greene St. (through Nov. 21); **Miquel Barcelo**, Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through Nov. 14); **Miguel Berrocal**, Katzen, 345 West Broadway (through Dec. 5); **Saint Clair Cemin**, Kasmin, 74 Grand St. (through Dec. 5); **Nancy Chunn**, Feldman, 31 Mercer St. (through Nov. 28); **Chuck Connelly**, Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway (through Nov. 14); **Sonia Delaunay** and **Charmion von Wiegand**, Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through Dec. 5); **Jimmie Durham**, Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St. (through Dec. 12); **Rafael Ferrer**, Hoffman, 429 West Broadway (through Dec. 2); **Joan Jonas** and **Rodney Graham**, Hearn, 39 Wooster St. (through Dec. 23); **Julian Lethbridge**, Cooper, 155 Wooster St. (through Dec. 3); **Simon Leung** and **Andrea Zittel**, Rosen, 130 Prince St. (through Nov. 28); **Al Loving**, Kelly, 591 Broadway (through Dec. 1); **Gian Marco Montesano**, Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through Nov. 28); **Matt Mullican**, Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through Nov. 28); **Ed Paschke**, Kind, 136 Greene St. (through Nov. 28); **Philip Pearlstein** and **Christopher Wilmarth**, Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway (through Dec. 5); **Margaret Pomfret**, Phoenix, 568 Broadway (through Nov. 21); **David Reed** (through Nov. 28) and **Aldo Rossi** (through Dec. 12), Protetch, 560 Broadway; **Tony Smith**, Cooper, 149 Wooster St. (through Nov. 28).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Sharp Focus

There's a double-whammy exhibition at Pace-MacGill (32 East 57th Street; through November 28): Frederick Sommer and Arthur Fellig (a.k.a. Weegee). At first, the two bodies of work may strike the viewer as utterly dissimilar—Sommer's pictures seem to be all about nature, and Weegee's about what the city brings out in human nature. But coming through both men's photographs is a gripping toughness. In shot after shot of Weegee's, one witnesses tragedies, accidents, crimes, shocks. And with Sommer one sees the harshness of the natural world as opposed to something stereotypically beautiful. His landscapes' refusal to turn picturesque is almost relentless. And there are a couple of shots here, of dead animals, that feel as violent as the Weegee photographs in the adjacent gallery. Most of the photographs in both groups were taken in the late thirties and early forties, and they are strongly evocative of that era. There's a Weegee photograph, titled "Drunk," that shows a man's grimy face, his hair sticking out like beach weeds; he seems devoid of all hope. Looking at his bitter mouth, you can just taste his disappointment.

Jan Groover—Recent, large-format black-and-white still-lifes—shot outdoors, in natural light—made near the artist's new home, in southwestern France. Through Nov. 14. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Nicholas Nixon—A group of pictures that the artist took at the Perkins School for the Blind, in Watertown, Massachusetts, full of beauty, humor, and grit. And the shots here of his son, daughter, and wife are nearly perfect revelations of family intimacy—they're on a par with the wonderful portraits that Nixon has done, over several years, of his wife and her three sisters. Through Dec. 5. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

International Center of Photography Midtown—"American Legends," an exhibition of recent portraits by Yousuf Karsh, including Cesar Chavez, Dave Brubeck, Jim Henson, and Mother Clara Hale. Through Jan. 24. . . . ¶ Early black-and-white work by Ernst Haas. Through Jan. 24. (A complementary show of works by Haas is at Greenberg, 120 Wooster St., through Dec. 5.). . . ¶ "Egyptian Time," a series of photographs by Robert Lyons. Through Nov. 29. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**John Blakemore**, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Nov. 14); **John Divola**, Baum, 588 Broadway (through Nov. 28); **Robert Flynt** and **Connie Imboden**, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through Dec. 5); **Annie Leibovitz**, Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through Dec. 5); **Duane Michals** and **Lois Greenfield**, International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; both shows through Nov. 8); **Izhar Patkin** and **Nam June Paik**, Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 21); **Herb Ritts**, Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through Dec. 5); **Leo Rubinfien**, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45; through Jan. 3); **Aaron Siskind**, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. (through Nov. 21); **Philip Trager**, Saul, 155 Spring St. (through Nov. 14).

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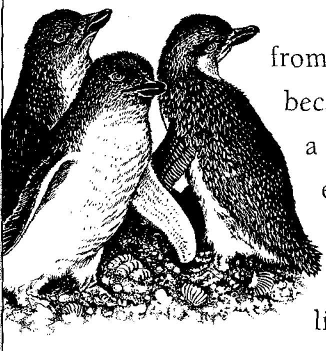

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MUSIC

Native Daughter

OBVIOUSLY it's possible for favorite artists to be overexposed. There was a time, a few years back, when it seemed that Alicia de Larrocha was playing in New York about once a month—a recital and a concerto date each summer with Mostly Mozart, more concertos (often more Mozart) with the Philharmonic or with a visiting orchestra or two, maybe a recital at the Y and another at Carnegie Hall, occasionally a collaboration with a celebrated Spanish singer. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that the pianist's Carnegie concert on November 16 hasn't quite sold out yet. So this is as good a time as any to remind oneself that for dexterity, charm of timbre, rhythmic inventiveness, modesty of approach, clarity of texture, and virtuoso firepower when needed, Alicia de Larrocha has had only four or five peers among postwar pianists (and not all of them are still alive). She excels in the music of her native Spain, so it's good to see that the announced program is Soler, Schumann, and de Falla, with the lion's share going to the last.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; for the Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 854-7799; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**SEMIRAMIDE**, with Christine Weidinger, Gloria Scalchi, Frank Lopardo, and Barseg Tumanyan; conducted by Ion Marin. (Nov. 9, Nov. 13, and Nov. 16, all at 7:30.). . . **L'ELISIR D'AMORE**, with Ruth Ann Swenson, Stanford Olsen, Gino Quilico, and Enzo Dara; Edoardo Müller. (Nov. 10 at 8.). . . With Ruth Ann Swenson, Stanford Olsen, Roberto Frontali, and Enzo Dara; Edoardo Müller. (Nov. 14 at 1:30 and Nov. 18 at 8.). . . **TOSCA**, with Carol Neblett, Emil Ivanov, and Sherrill Milnes; Christian Badea. (Nov. 11 at 8.). . . With Ghena Dimitrova, Emil Ivanov, and Sherrill Milnes; Christian Badea. (Nov. 14 at 8.). . . With Ghena Dimitrova, Lando Bartolini, and Sherrill Milnes; Christian Badea. (Nov. 17 at 8.). . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY**, with Diana Soviero, Wendy White, Allan Glassman, and Juan Pons; Julius Rudel. (Nov. 12 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—Final performances of the season. **CARMEN**, with Susanne Marsee, Eva Zseller, Antonio Barasorda, and Edward Huls; conducted by Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Nov. 10 at 8.). . . **110 IN THE SHADE**, with Karen Ziémba, Crista Moore, Brian Sutherland, and Richard Muenz; Paul Gemignani. (Nov. 11 and Nov. 13 at 8; Nov. 12 at 7; Nov. 14 at 1:30 and 8; and Nov. 15 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

PEKING OPERA TROUPE—Presenting "The Monkey King Raids the Heavens," featuring Li Baochun (whose interpretations draw strongly on Chinese martial-arts traditions). (Taipei Theatre, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 48th St. 373-1850. Nov. 12-14 at 7:30 and Nov. 15 at 2. Through Nov. 22.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Presenting Gounod's "Faust," on an intimate scale, conducted by Anthony Amato. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Nov. 13-14 at 7:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. André Previn conducts Haydn's Symphony No. 92 (the "Oxford"), Ravel's "Mother Goose Suite," and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5 (the "Emperor," with Emanuel Ax). (Nov. 12 and Nov. 14 at 8, Nov. 13 at 2, and Nov. 17 at 7:30.)

Kirov Orchestra of St. Petersburg—Valery Gergiev conducts music by Tchaikovsky (his Symphony No. 6 and excerpts from "The Sleeping Beauty") and Shostakovich (his Violin Concerto No. 1, with Vadim Repin). (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 9 at 8.)

Concert Royal—James Richman directs jubilant works by J. S. Bach—his Magnificat and Cantatas No. 214 and No. 51 (the latter with soprano Christine Brandes and Baroque trumpeter John Thiessen)—and a morose "Lamento" by Heinrich Bach (Johann Sebastian's great-uncle). (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 11 at 8.)

St. Bartholomew's Choir—James Litton directs an all-Duruflé concert, including his Requiem; with organist William Trafka. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Nov. 11 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra—Richard Auldon Clark conducts the première of David Soldier's "Ultraviolet Railroad," in addition to works by Cowell, Stravinsky, Thomson, and Milhaud (his "La Création du Monde"). (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. Nov. 11 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

American Symphony Orchestra—Leon Botstein conducts music inspired by the aesthetics of Surrealism (perhaps of special interest to visitors to the Metropolitan Museum who wonder what Magritte might *sound* like). The program ranges from Poulenc's Dada-esque ballet suite "Les Biches" (which means "The Does" but is sometimes called "The House Party"), Charles Koechlin's "Les Bandar-log" (a symphonic poem inspired by Kipling's "Jungle Book"), and Varèse's "Arcana" (for enormous orchestra) to Cage's Concerto for Prepared Piano (a twenty-odd-minute-long work from 1951 whose constant repetition of basic rhythmic cells was also inspired by the Indian subcontinent) and the United States première of "Collage," by Magritte's Belgian contemporary André Souris. Alan Feinberg is the soloist in the Cage. (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 13 at 7:25, preceded by a lecture at 6:15.)

New York Pops—For a good lei. Skitch Henderson conducts works with a "Hawaiian" flavor (featuring Cathy Foy), as well as Grieg's "Lyric Suite" and Grofé's "Grand Canyon Suite." (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 13 at 8.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic—Dennis Russell Davies leads works by Philip Glass: his "Music in Similar Motion," the world première of "Low Symphony" (a work based on themes by Brian Eno and David Bowie), and "Itaipu" (inspired by the composer's visit to the mammoth hydroelectric project on the Brazilian-Paraguayan border, and here employing the singers of the New York Choral Society). (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Nov. 13-14 at 8.)

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra—The conductorless ensemble performs Haydn's Symphony No. 73 ("La Chasse"), Shostakovich's C-Minor Symphony for Strings (arranged from his Eighth String Quartet), Mahler's "Rückert Lieder" (featuring soprano Martina Arroyo), and excerpts from Beethoven's incidental music for "The Creatures of Prometheus." (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 14 at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts Handel's "Water Music" and "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day," with the latter featuring soprano Juliana Gondek, tenor David Gordon, and the Mannes Chamber Singers. (92nd Street Y. Nov. 14 at 8.)

Cantata Singers of the Choral Symphony Society—David Labovitz directs Bach's Cantatas No. 198 ("Trauer Ode") and No. 205 ("Der Zufriedengestellte Aeolus"). (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Nov. 15 at 3. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Florilegium Chamber Choir and Orchestra—JoAnn Rice directs works by Schütz and Schein. (German Church, 315 W. 22nd St. Nov. 15 at 3. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Goliard Concerts—Patricia Handy directs Frank Martin's "Le Vin Herbé," for soloists, chorus, and chamber ensemble. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 15 at 7:30.)

National Arts Centre Orchestra of Ottawa—Trevor Pinnock has been scarce in town since his blowup with the Classical Band (which, you may have noticed, seems to have faded from the scene). He returns at the helm of his own orchestra, with a program that belies his early prominence as an early-music practitioner: Prokofiev's Symphony No. 1 (the "Classical"), Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 3 (the "Scotch"), Bruch's G-Minor Violin Concerto (featuring Dmitry Sitkovetsky), and a recent work by Linda Bouchard, the orchestra's composer-in-residence. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 15 at 8.)

Juilliard Orchestra—James DePreist conducts Schuman's "American Festival Overture," Bartók's "Concerto for Orchestra," and Walton's Violin Concerto (featuring Juliette Kang). (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 16 at 8.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducts Haydn's Symphony No. 100 (the "Military") and Mahler's Symphony No. 4 (with soprano Roberta Alexander). (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 17 at 8.)

Houston Symphony Orchestra—Christoph Eschenbach conducts Ives' "Three Places in New England," Dvořák's Symphony No. 8, and Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto (with Tzimon Barto). (Avery Fisher Hall. Nov. 18 at 8.)

RECITALS

Sylvan Winds—Performing wind music by Mozart, Carl Reinecke, Martin Bresnick, and Elliot Carter (his "Eight Études and a Fantasy"). (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Nov. 9 at 8.)

North/South Consonance—Presenting de Falla's Harpsichord Concerto (featuring Max Lifchitz as soloist), as well as works by Emma Lou Diemer, Roque Cordero, Rodolfo Halffter, and others. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Nov. 9 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Cosmopolitan Chamber Players—Presenting music by Brahms (his B-Major Trio), Ravel, Bernstein, and Gerhard Samuel (a première). (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Nov. 10 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 873-7784.)

Hai-Ye Ni—Cellist, performing sonatas by Poulenc and Britten, Chopin's "Introduction and Polonaise Brillante," and other works; with pianist Anne Epperson. (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 10 at 8.)

Assad Duo—The Brazilian brothers Sergio and Odair Assad play classical-guitar duets by Villa-Lobos, Astor Piazzolla, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 10 at 8.)

Frederick Lonberg-Holm Ensemble—The composer/cellist and four co-conspirators play new works, among them "Roll," a 1989 composition for four golf-ball rollers and cello. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. Nov. 10 at 8.)

Guarneri Quartet—Performing Haydn's "Lark" Quartet (Op. 64, No. 5), Dohnányi's Quartet in D-Flat (Op. 15), and Hindemith's "Die Serenaden" (with soprano Lucy Shelton and oboist Ronald Roseman). (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 11 at 8.)

"The (R)evolutionary Keyboard"—A series featuring composing keyboardists who explore new approaches to the piano and its electronic descendants. Nov. 11: Anthony Davis. . . . ¶ Nov. 12-13: Frederic Rzewski, in two different programs. . . . ¶ Nov. 14: Blue Gene Tyranny's trio and Ushio Torikai. . . . ¶ Nov. 15: David Weinstein (with vocalist Shelley Hirsch). (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Evenings at 8:30.)

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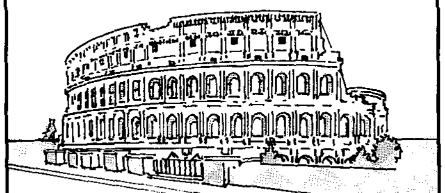

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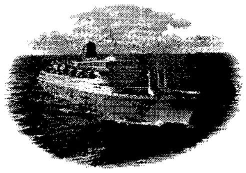

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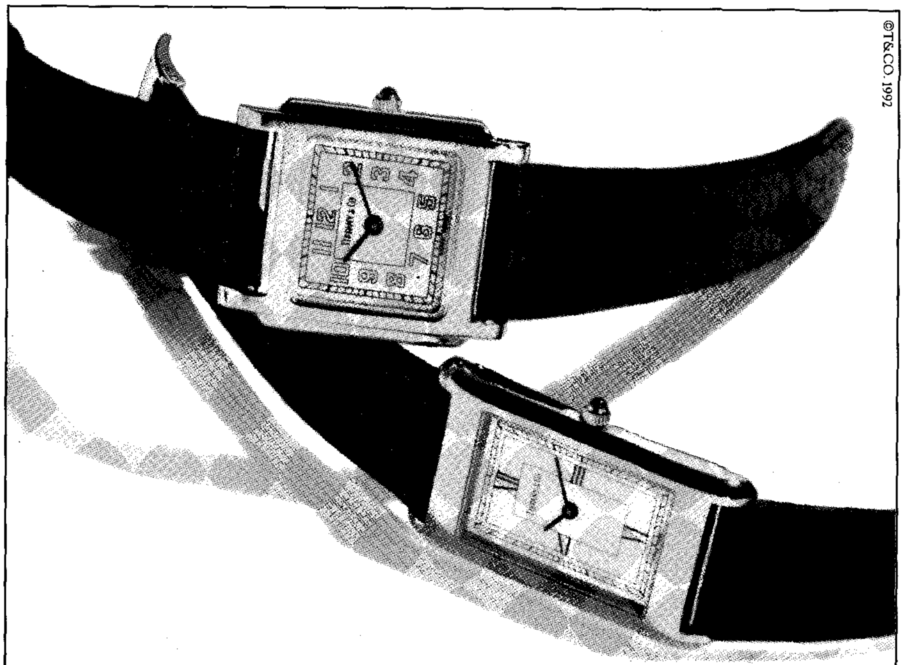

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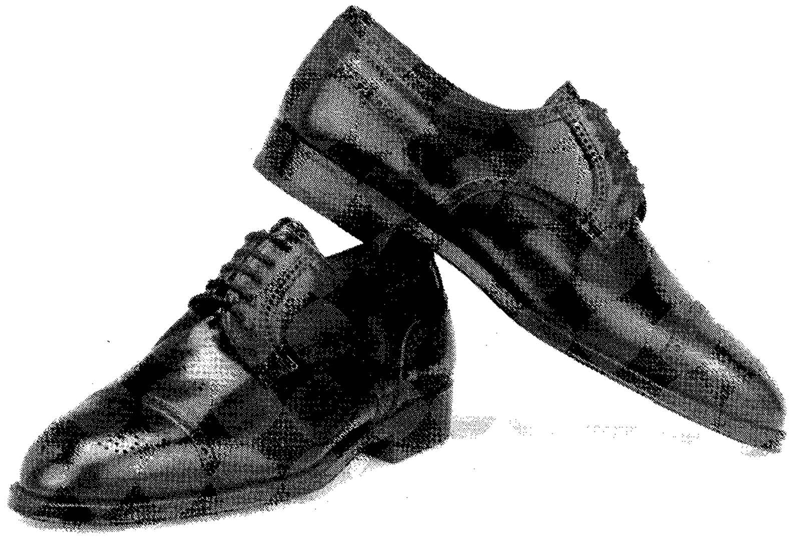

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MUSIC–Cont'd

Bargemusic—Presenting piano quartets by Beethoven (actually an arrangement of his piano-and-winds quintet) and Brahms (in A Major), as well as a solo composition by James Winn (who will occupy the piano bench throughout the concert). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Nov. 12 at 7:30 and Nov. 15 at 4.)

David Holzman—Pianist, performing Stefan Wolpe's monstrously challenging "Battle Piece" (penned in 1943-44, in violent response to the bellicose climate of its time), the New York première of Raoul Pleskow's Piano Sonata No. 1, sonatas by Beethoven (Op. 101) and Griffes, and Schoenberg's "Drei Klavierstücke" (Op. 11). (Miller Theatre. Nov. 12 at 8.)

Musicians from Marlboro—Performing vocal and instrumental chamber music by Haydn, Mendelssohn (his String Quintet in B-Flat, Op. 87), Dvořák, and Janáček. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 12 at 8.)

Paula Robison—The flutist and numerous colleagues play concertos by Vivaldi and Bach. (Temple of Dendur, Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Nov. 13-14 at 7.)

New York Festival of Song—Beaucoup de "B"s: ballads by Bernstein, Blitzstein, Barber, Bolcom, and Bowles, among others, under the supervision of pianists Barrett (Michael) and Blier (Steven). (Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 13 at 8.)

Newband—The ensemble draws on its collection of exotic and recently invented instruments to perform works by Harry Partch, Dean Drummond, and John Zorn. (Miller Theatre. Nov. 13 at 8.)

Ensemble for Early Music—Frederick Renz directs fifteenth-century music. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Nov. 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

Thomas Hampson—The baritone sings twenty songs by Schumann, as well as more recent English-language compositions; with pianist Craig Rutenberg. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 15 at 2.)

Aspen Wind Quintet—Playing works by Milhaud, Janáček, Carter, and Paul Taffanel. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. Nov. 15 at 2.)

Santiago Rodriguez—The pianist concludes his Rachmaninoff series. (92nd Street Y. Nov. 15 at 3.)

Mendelssohn Marathon—Pianist David Buechner, violinist Charles Libove, and cellist Richard Locker perform all of the composer's violin sonatas, cello sonatas, and piano trios—two of each—spread over two concerts. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Nov. 15 at 3. No tickets necessary. The second concert will take place on Nov. 22.)

Wentworth Duo—Jean and Kenneth Wentworth perform four-hand piano music by Schubert (including the F-Minor Fantasy). (Wave Hill, Independence Ave. at W. 249th St., the Bronx. Nov. 15 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Jean Guillou—The titular organist of Paris's Church of St. Eustache, whose iconoclastic Bach recordings (on the Dorian label) have caused a great brouhaha among purists, will perform Franck, Liszt, Mozart, and—but of course—Bach, in addition to improvisations. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. Nov. 15 at 4.)

An Die Musik—At Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 15 at 4: The chamber group includes in its program Mozart's Oboe Quartet and Piano Quartet in E-Flat, as well as trios by Beethoven (one an original piano trio, WoO 39, and the other an arrangement). . . . ¶ Nov. 16 at 6:30: A briefer concert, with some overlap from the day before, plus munchies.

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Performing Mozart's "Kegelstatt" Trio, Dvořák's D-Major Piano Quartet, and Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time." (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 15 at 5 and Nov. 17 at 7:30.)

New York Trombone Ensemble—Eight trombonists in a parlor, with tea and sherry on the sideboard, performing transcriptions from nineteenth-century operas, since you were wondering. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Nov. 15 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Alicia de Larrocha—The pianist performs Schumann's C-Major Fantasia, in addition to sonatas by Soler and works by de Falla. (Carnegie Hall. Nov. 16 at 8.)

Washington Square Contemporary Music Society—Presenting New York premières of music by Arthur Berger, Brian Fennelly, and Leo Kraft, among others. (Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 16 at 8.)

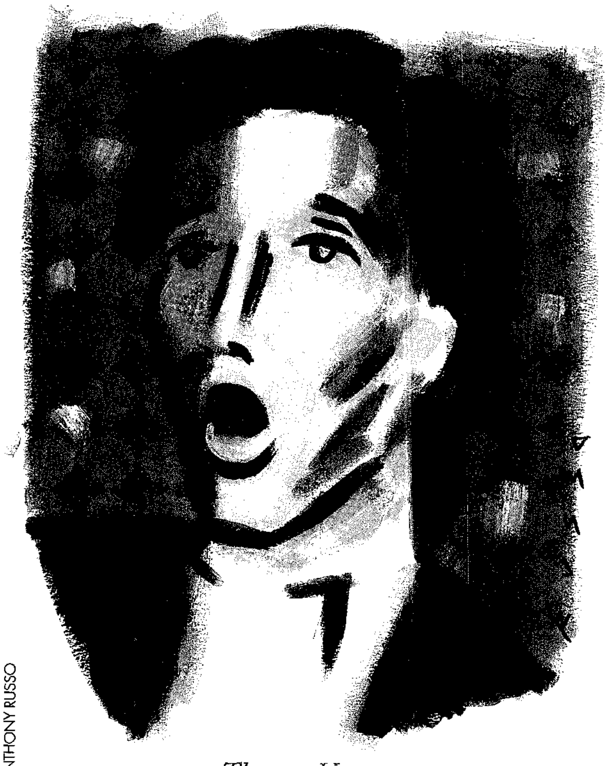
Anssi Karttunen—In his New York début, the cellist (fresh from a concerto début with the Los Angeles Philharmonic) plays works by Schumann, Enescu, Webern, and others; with pianist Tuija Hakkila. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 16 at 8:30.)

Andrew Nethsingha—The British organist plays mostly nineteenth- and twentieth-century music from France and Britain. (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. Nov. 17 at 5:30. Admission by contribution.)

St. Lawrence String Quartet—The foursome, currently serving as quartet-in-residence at Juilliard, performs Mozart's "Dissonance" Quartet, Beethoven's Quartet No. 13 (Op. 131), and Berg's Quartet. Presented by Young Concert Artists. (92nd Street Y. Nov. 17 at 8.)

Scharron-Carranza Duo—The Paris-based guitar-and-flute duo performs works (many of which were written expressly for them) by Latin American composers, in addition to Honegger. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 17 at 8.)

Robert White—When it comes to putting across a ringing Irish ballad, a perfumed serenade from an Edwardian parlor, or a Gay Nineties waltz tune, Robert White is the tenor of preference. In three "retrospective" concerts this season, he will take stock of his career to date, from childhood radio stardom to groundbreaking participation in early music and the contemporary scene, two dozen recordings (everything from Schubert lieder to "Mistress Biddy was a Giddy Little Widdy"), and recitals for the rich and famous (including command performances for five United States Presidents, four British Royals, and three Popes). His opening concert includes Renaissance lute songs (with guitarist Sharon Isbin), Baroque airs (with harpsichordist Albert Fuller), folk-song arrangements by Beethoven (with a chamber group), and songs by composers from Mozart to Richard Rodgers (with pianist Samuel Sanders). (Alice Tully Hall. Nov. 18 at 8.)



ANTHONY RUSSO

Thomas Hampson

Sergiu Luca and Brian Connelly—The violinist and the pianist play fantasies by Schubert (his C-Major "Fantasia"), Schoenberg ("Fantasie"), William Bolcom ("Duo Fantasy"), and Curtis Curtis-Smith ("Fantasy Pieces"). (Miller Theatre. Nov. 18 at 8.)

Speculum Musicae—Bass-baritone Jan Opalach joins the group in a concert of works by Morton Feldman and Stefan Wolpe. (Merkin Concert Hall. Nov. 18 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Mary-Chapin Carpenter—This countrified-pop singer's first three albums were pretty darn good, but "Come On Come On," which was released this summer, is a stunning achievement. The rockers swing, the feminist anthems are funny and stinging, and the ballads are emotionally sure. Carpenter plumbs pop-music forms and makes her songs living human documents. It's the same kind of alchemy that Springsteen and Rosanne Cash perform, and Mary-Chapin is becoming their peer. Get those cowboy boots out of the closet and come on down. Hal Ketchum is the opening act. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Nov. 16 at 8.)

Mary Cleere Haran—Unlike those club singers whose patter is a punishment to be endured between numbers, Ms. Haran is revealed through her aperçus to be literate, astute, and entertaining. Her singing is every bit as fine, and her repertoire—Berlin, Rodgers, and other American classics—is hard to top. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Nov. 11 at 8.)

Bruce Springsteen—Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Nov. 9-10 at 7:30.

Freddie Jackson—With CeCe Peniston, Meli'sa Morgan, and Najee. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Nov. 10 at 7.)

Randy Newman—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Nov. 10 at 8.

The Ramones/Social Distortion—Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. Nov. 10-11 at 8.

Hozan Yamamoto—With the Karl Berger trio and others. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. Nov. 10-11 at 8.)

Alison Fraser—92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Nov. 11 at 8.

Art Taylor—With Taylor's Wailers and friends in a salute to Bud Powell. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. Nov. 12 at 8 and 10. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Al Jarreau—With Joe Sample. (Paramount. Nov. 12-13 at 8.)

Gilberto Gil—Town Hall. Nov. 13 at 8.

Samite—In a program of Ugandan folk music. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Nov. 13 at 8. For information about tickets, call 545-7536.)

Linda Ronstadt—With Ray Santos. (Roseland. Nov. 13-14 at 9.)

Hamza El Din—Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Nov. 14 at 8.

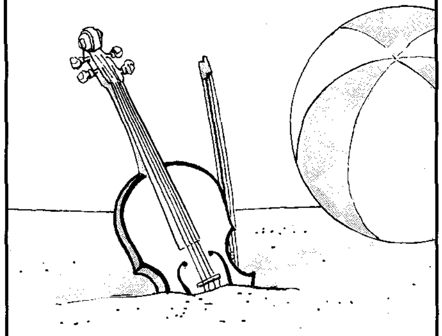
Arts at St. Ann's—Presenting the Holmes Brothers, Fontella Bass, John Dee Holeman, and the Birmingham Sunlights. (157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Nov. 14 at 8.)

"Heavenly Jazz"—Presenting the John Bunch trio. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Nov. 15 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

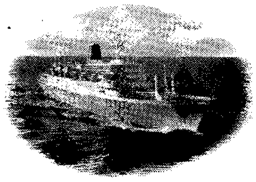
Janis Siegel—92nd Street Y. Nov. 18 at 8.

Amanda McBroom—Weill Recital Hall. Nov. 18 at 8.

VISTAFJORD'S MUSIC THEME CRUISES



MOZART HITS THE BEACH.



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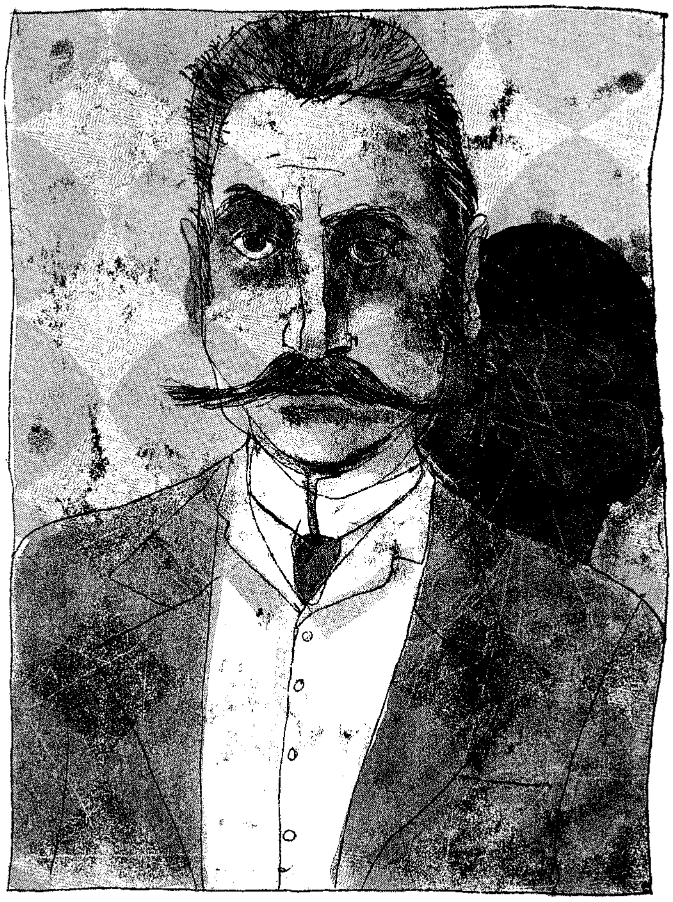

Stanford White

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Jets—Vs. the Cincinnati Bengals, Nov. 15 at 1.

Knicks—Vs. the Nets, Nov. 10. . . . ¶ Vs. the Boston Celtics, Nov. 14. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Home opener vs. the Minnesota Timberwolves, Nov. 12 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Orlando Magic, Nov. 14 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Bullets, Nov. 15 at 7. . . . ¶ Vs. the Utah Jazz, Nov. 17 at 7:30.

Rangers—Vs. the Tampa Bay Lightning, Nov. 9. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Capitals, Nov. 11. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, Nov. 14 at 7:35.

Devils—Vs. the Montreal Canadiens, Nov. 11. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Capitals, Nov. 13. (Game time, 7:35.)

(The Jets play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-516 538-6600; the Knicks and the Rangers at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

CHAMPIONSHIP—TENNIS

Virginia Slims Tournament—The top sixteen women, on the courts in Madison Square Garden. Matches start Nov. 16 at 5:30 and end with the final, Nov. 22 at 12:30. For information about tickets, call 465-6500.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Soulful Day—Gregg Payne, minister of music at Harlem's Metropolitan Baptist Church, will lead a daylong gospel workshop, teaching everything from spirituals and shout songs to gospel blues and quartets. Open to all, regardless of singing experience. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Nov. 14 from 10 to 5. To register, call 677-9055.)

Stanford White—The architectural wonders of this Renaissance New Yorker will be celebrated by the Municipal Art Society in an exhibit (Nov. 10 to Dec. 4; daily, except Thursdays and Sundays, 11 to 5), a free talk (Nov. 12 at noon; call 935-3960 for reservations), and a Greenwich Village walking tour (Nov. 14, from 1 *to 3; call 439-1049*). (457 Madison Ave., at 57th St.)

Gianni Versace—An exhibition highlighting fifteen years of the designer's work in embroidery, metal, leather, the long dress, and theatrical costumes. (Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. Tuesdays to Fridays, noon to 8, and Saturdays, 10 to 5. Through Jan. 9.)

Words—Nov. 10 at 8:30: Eileen Myles and Rene Ricard, among others, will read from their own works in a remembrance of Jean-Michel Basquiat. (Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Nov. 16 at 7: Clayton Eshleman and Ron Padgett will read from the poetry of Blaise Cendrars and César Vallejo. (French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Nov. 16 at 8: Ian McEwan and Martin Amis will read from their own fiction. (New York Academy of Medicine, 2 E. 103rd St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Nov. 16 at 8: Joan Larkin and Timothy Liu will read from their own poetry. (A Different Light, 548 Hudson St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Nov. 17 at 7: Frank Bidart and C. K. Williams will read from their own poetry. (French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Nov. 17 at 8: The fifteen finalists for the National Book Awards in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry will read from their nominated works. (Equitable Center Auditorium, 787 Seventh Ave., at 52nd St. For tickets, call 645-5848.). . . ¶ Nov 17 at 8: Julian Barnes will read from his new novel, "The Porcupine." (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Nov. 11 at 6: Alain Robbe-Grillet talks about "Love and Sex in the New Novel." In French, with simultaneous English translation. (Mercantile Library, 17 E. 47th St. 755-6711.). . . ¶ Nov 11 at 7: Tess Gallagher will speak on the craft of poetry. (Poetry Society of America, 15 Gramercy Park S. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.). . . ¶ Nov. 12 at 6: An Audubon slide show on plant and animal life in New York City's parks. (Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Nov. 13 at 8: Writers Fielding Dawson and Michael Rumaker will talk about their experiences at North Carolina's Black Mountain College. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.)

Veterans Day—Nov. 11. The parade, which starts at 9 A.M., runs along Fifth Ave. from 39th St. to 24th St.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 32.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: "Enchanted April" (directed by Mike Newell), with Miranda Richardson, Josie Lawrence, Polly Walker, and Joan Plowright.

Theatre 2: "Swoon" (Tom Kalin), with Craig Chester and Daniel Schlachet.

Theatre 3: (Separate admissions) "Night on Earth" (Jim Jarmusch); and "Delicatessen" (Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, in French).

Theatre 4: "My New Gun" (†).

Theatre 5: "Simple Men" (Hal Hartley), with Robert Burke and William Sage.

Theatre 6: "In the Soup" (Alexandre Rockwell), with Seymour Cassel and Steve Buscemi.

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

Nov. 9: Theatre closed.

Nov. 10: (Separate admissions) "Sandman" (Stefano Gabrini, in Italian); "The Cherry Orchard" (Antonello Aglioti, in Italian); and "Another Life" (Carlo Marzacurati, in Italian).

Nov. 11: (Separate admissions) "Confortorio" (Paolo Benvenuti, in Italian); "ACLA" (Aurelio Grimaldi, in Italian); and "Death of a Neapolitan Mathematician" (Mario Martone, in Italian).

Nov. 12: (Separate admissions) "Another Life," "Sandman," and "The Cherry Orchard."

From Nov, 13: "Aventis" (1989, Vicente Aranda; in Spanish).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "Passenger 57" (Kevin Hooks), with Wesley Snipes, Bruce Payne, and Tom Sizemore.

Theatre 2: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).

Theatre 3: "Candyman" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)

Theatre 1: "Blade Runner" (1982, Ridley Scott), with Harrison Ford.

Theatre 2: "Reservoir Dogs" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Efficiency Expert" (Mark Joffe), with Anthony Hopkins.

Theatre 4: "A River Runs Through It" (†).

Theatre 5: "Under Siege" (†).

Theatre 6: Through Nov. 12: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†). From Nov. 13: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

Theatre 7: "Jennifer Eight" (Bruce Robinson), with Andy Garcia, Uma Thuman, and Lance Henrickson.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)

Theatre 1: "Johnny Stecchino" (Roberto Benigni, in Italian), with Benigni.

Theatre 2: "Zebrahead" (†).

Theatre 3: "A Brief History of Time" (†).

Theatre 4: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.

Theatre 5: "Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins.

Theatre 6: "Painting the Town" (Andrew Behar), a documentary.

Theatre 7: "The Panama Deception" (Barbara Trent), a documentary.

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 12: "Husbands and Wives" (Woody Allen). From Nov. 13: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

Theatre 2: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.

Theatre 3: "Jennifer Eight" (Bruce Robinson), with Andy Garcia.

Theatre 4: "Passenger 57" (Kevin Hooks), with Wesley Snipes, Bruce Payne, and Tom Sizemore.

Theatre 5: "Fathers and Sons" (Paul Mones), with Jeff Goldblum and Rory Cochrane.

Theatre 6: "Candyman" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"Bob Roberts" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

Through Nov. 12: "Hero" (†).

From Nov. 13: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)

Theatre 1: "Of Mice and Men" (†).

Theatre 2: "Gas Food Lodging" (Allison Anders), with Brooke Adams, Ione Skye, and Fairuza Balk.

Theatre 3: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.

Theatre 4: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "Under Siege" (†).

Theatre 2: "Jennifer Eight" (Bruce Robinson), with Andy Garcia, Uma Thuman, and Lance Henrickson.

Theatre 3: "Passenger 57" (Kevin Hooks), with Wesley Snipes, Bruce Payne, and Tom Sizemore.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

Through Nov. 12: "The Public Eye" (†).

From Nov. 13: "Love Potion #9" (Dale Launer), with Tate Donovan and Sandra Bullock.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"Zebrahead" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: "Becoming Colette" (Danny Huston), with Klaus Maria Brandauer, Mathilda May, and Virginia Madsen.

Theatre 2: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"The Last of the Mohicans" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"Bob Roberts" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Passenger 57" (Kevin Hooks), with Wesley Snipes, Bruce Payne, and Tom Sizemore.

Theatre 2: "Passenger 57."

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Hero" (†).

Theatre 2: "Night and the City" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 10: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey. From Nov. 11: "Aladdin" (Ron Clements and John Musker), an animated film.

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 10: "In the Soup" (Alexandre Rockwell), with Seymour Cassel and Steve Buscemi. From Nov. 11: "Consenting Adults."

Theatre 3: "Enchanted April" (Mike Newell), with Miranda Richardson, Josie Lawrence, Polly Walker, and Joan Plowright.

Art East Cinema, 1st Ave. at 61st. (644-1111)

"Venice/Venice" (Henry Jaglom), with Nelly Alard and Jaglom.

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)

Theatre 1: "Sneakers" (Phil Alden Robinson).

Theatre 2: "Of Mice and Men" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Nov. 12: "The Public Eye" (†). From Nov. 13: "Love Potion #9" (Dale Launer), with Tate Donovan and Sandra Bullock

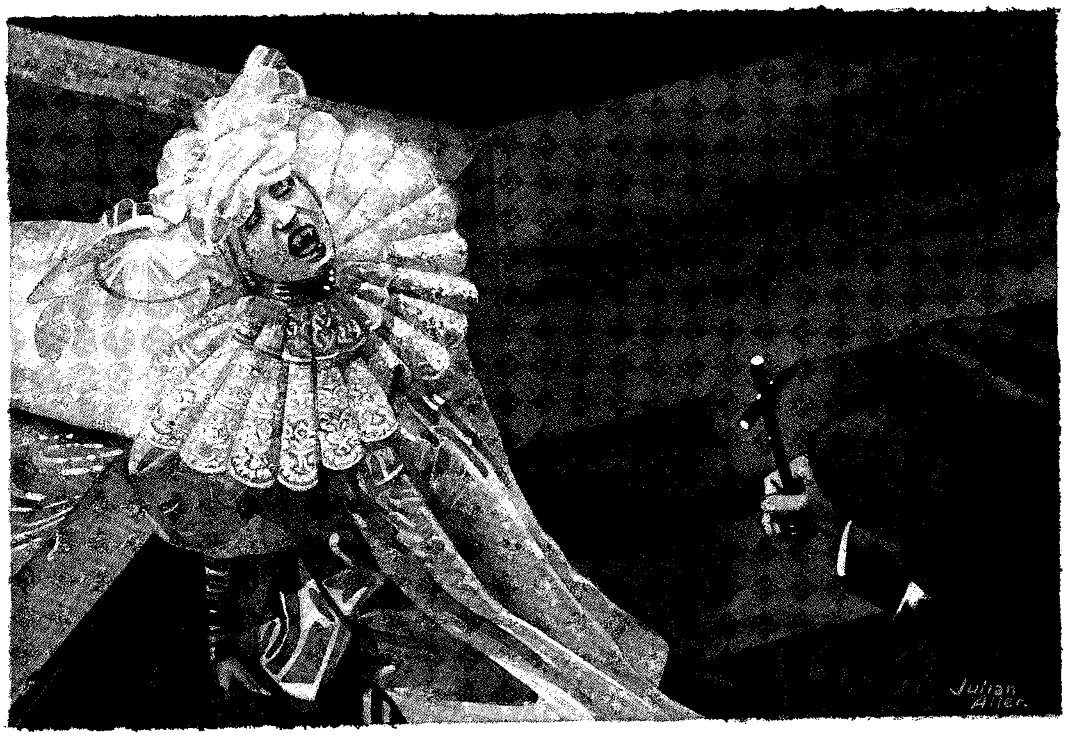
Theatre 4: Through Nov. 10: "1492: Conquest of Paradise" (Ridley Scott), with Gérard Depardieu. From Nov. 11: "Traces of Red" (Andy Wolk), with James Belushi, Lorraine Bracco, and Tony Goldwyn.

Theatre 5: "Singles" (†).

Theatre 6: "Mr. Saturday Night" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: Through Nov. 17: "Candyman" (†). From Nov. 18: "Malcolm X" (Spike Lee), with Denzel Washington.


Julian Allen.

Sadie Frost in "Bram Stoker's Dracula"

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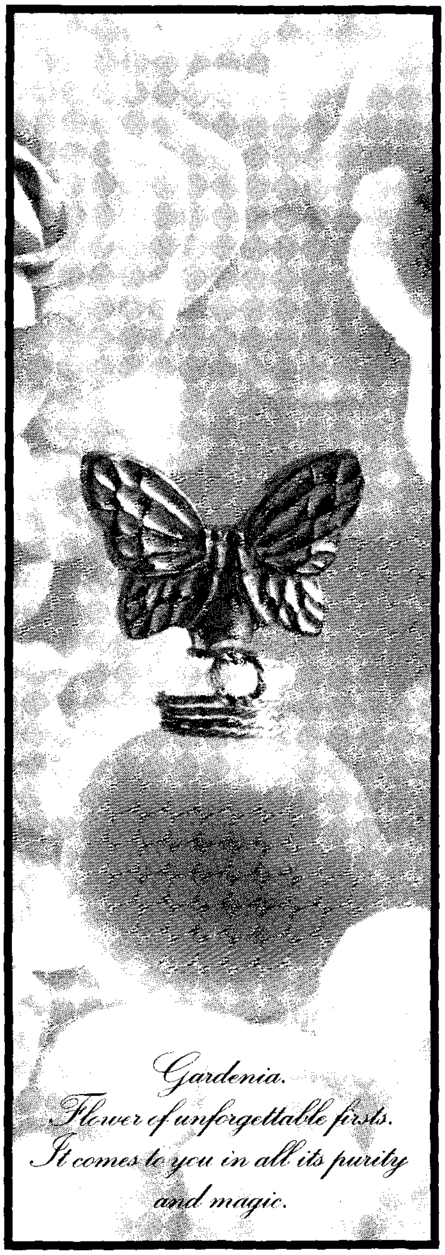
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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Theatre 2: Through Nov. 17: "Under Siege" (†). From Nov. 18: "Malcolm X."

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Husbands and Wives" (Woody Allen).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "A River Runs Through It" (†).
Theatre 2: "Jennifer Eight" (Bruce Robinson), with Andy Garcia, Uma Thuman, and Lance Henrickson.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Johnny Stecchino" (Roberto Benigni, in Italian), with Benigni.

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
Through Nov. 12: "Rampage" (William Friedkin), with Michael Biehn and Alex McArthur.
From Nov. 13: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Jennifer Eight" (Bruce Robinson), with Andy Garcia, Uma Thuman, and Lance Henrickson.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Night and the City" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hero" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Fathers and Sons" (Paul Mones), with Jeff Goldblum and Rory Cochrane.
Theatre 2: "Passenger 57" (Kevin Hooks), with Wesley Snipes, Bruce Payne, and Tom Sizemore.
Theatre 3: "Singles" (†).
Theatre 4: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).
Theatre 5: "Candyman" (†).
Theatre 6: "Under Siege" (†).
Theatre 7: Through Nov. 12: "The Mighty Ducks" (Stephen Herek), with Emilio Estevez, Joss Ackland, and Lane Smith; and "Rampage" (William Friedkin), with Michael Biehn and Alex McArthur. From Nov. 13: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 2: "Bob Roberts" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 17: "The Quarrel" (directed by Eli Cohen). From Nov. 18: "To Render a Life" (Ross Spears), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "8 ½" (1963, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni, Anouk Aimée, Sandra Milo, and Claudia Cardinale.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 10: "Dr. Giggles" (Manny Coto), with Larry Drake. From Nov. 11: "Traces of Red" (Andy Wolk), with James Belushi, Lorraine Bracco, and Tony Goldwyn.
Theatre 2: "Of Mice and Men" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 12: "The Public Eye" (†). From Nov. 13: "Love Potion #9" (Dale Launer), with Tate Donovan and Sandra Bullock
Theatre 2: "Night and the City" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 12: "Danzón" (María Novaro; a Mexican film, in Spanish). From Nov. 13: "Damned in the USA" (Paul Yule), a documentary.
Theatre 2: "Brother's Keeper" (Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky), a documentary.
Theatre 3: "Light Sleeper" (Paul Schrader), with Willem Dafoe and Susan Sarandon.
Theatre 4: "Bob Roberts" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Under Siege" (†).
Theatre 2: "Reservoir Dogs" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Nov. 10: "The Public Eye" (†). From Nov. 11: "Traces of Red" (Andy Wolk), with James Belushi, Lorraine Bracco, and Tony Goldwyn.
Theatre 4: "Sneakers" (Phil Alden Robinson).
Theatre 5: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).
Theatre 6: "Night and the City" (†).
Theatre 7: "Hero" (†).
Theatre 8: Through Nov. 12: "Night and the City" (†). From Nov. 13: "Love Potion #9" (Dale Launer), with Tate Donovan and Sandra Bullock
Theatre 9: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Dr. Giggles" (Manny Coto), with Larry Drake.
Theatre 2: "Singles" (†).
Theatre 3: "Of Mice and Men" (†).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Bob Roberts" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sneakers" (Phil Alden Robinson).
Theatre 3: "Dr. Giggles" (Manny Coto), with Larry Drake.
Theatre 4: "The Public Eye" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).
Theatre 6: "Of Mice and Men" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Mr. Saturday Night" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Hugh Hefner: Once Upon a Time" (Robert Heath), a documentary.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Flirting" (John Duigan).
Theatre 2: "The Efficiency Expert" (Mark Joffe), with Anthony Hopkins.

Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Lover" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins.

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"A River Runs Through It" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
Through Nov. 12: "Night and the City" (†).
From Nov. 13: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 12: "A Brief History of Time" (†). From Nov. 13: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (Alain Corneau, in French), with Jean-Pierre Marielle, Gérard Depardieu, Anne Brochet, and Guillaume Depardieu.
Theatre 2: "The Match Factory Girl" (Aki Kaurismaki).
Theatre 3: "Waterland" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Nov. 12: "Waterland" (†). From Nov. 13: "Tous les Matins du Monde."
Theatre 5: "Van Gogh" (Maurice Pailat, in French), with Jacques Dutronc.
Theatre 6: "Close to Eden" (Nikita Mikhalkov, in Russian).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"The Last of the Mohicans" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Husbands and Wives" (Woody Allen).
Theatre 2: "Jennifer Eight" (Bruce Robinson), with Andy Garcia, Uma Thuman, and Lance Henrickson.
Theatre 3: "Reservoir Dogs" (†).
Theatre 4: "Passenger 57" (Kevin Hooks), with Wesley Snipes, Bruce Payne, and Tom Sizemore.
Theatre 5: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Kevin Spacey.
Theatre 6: "Under Siege" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins.
Theatre 2: "The Public Eye" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 12: "Candyman" (†). From Nov. 13: "Love Potion #9" (Dale Launer), with Tate Donovan and Sandra Bullock
Theatre 2: "Hero" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Under Siege" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Nov. 17: "South Central" (†). From Nov. 18: "Malcolm X" (directed by Spike Lee), with Denzel Washington.

Theatre 3: "Passenger 57" (Kevin Hooks), with Wesley Snipes, Bruce Payne, and Tom Sizemore.
Theatre 4: "Candyman" (†).
Theatre 5: "Night and the City" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Nov. 12: "Passenger 57." From Nov. 13: "Love Potion #9" (Dale Launer), with Tate Donovan and Sandra Bullock.
Theatre 7: Through Nov. 17: "Passenger 57." From Nov. 18: "Malcolm X."

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Jennifer Eight" (Bruce Robinson), with Andy Garcia, Uma Thuman, and Lance Henrickson.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Sarafina!" (Darrell James Roodt), with Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 2: "Hero" (†).
Theatre 3: "Zebrahead" (†).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through Nov. 12: "Rampage" (William Friedkin), with Michael Biehn and Alex McArthur.
From Nov. 13: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

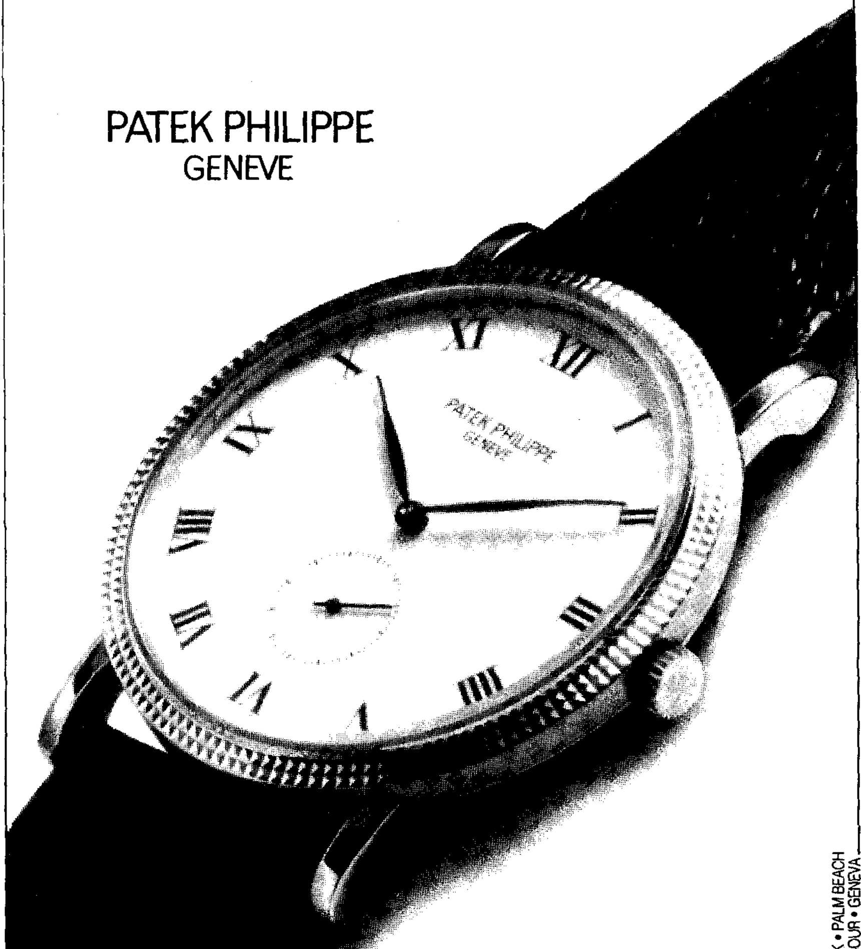
National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through Nov. 10: "Dr. Giggles" (Manny Coto), with Larry Drake. From Nov. 11: "Traces of Red" (Andy Wolk), with James Belushi, Lorraine Bracco, and Tony Goldwyn.
Theatre 2: "The Last of the Mohicans" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
"Nashville" (1975, directed by Robert Altman), with Ronee Blakley.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Nov. 9: "Jean de Florette" (1985, Claude Berri; in French), with Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, Elisabeth Depardieu, and Daniel Auteuil; and "Manon of the Spring" (1987, Berri; in French), with Montand, Auteuil, and Emmanuelle Béart.
Nov. 10: "Victim" (1961, Basil Dearden), with Dirk Bogarde, Sylvia Syms, and Dennis Price; and "Peeping Tom" (1960, Michael Powell), with Karl Boehm and Moira Shearer.
Nov. 11: "Indiscretion of an American Wife" (1954, Vittorio De Sica), with Jennifer Jones, Montgomery Clift, Richard Beymer, and Gino Cervi; and "The Gold of Naples" (1957, De Sica; in Italian), with Sophia Loren, De Sica, Silvana Magnano, and Totò.
Nov. 12: "Rope" (1948, Alfred Hitchcock), with James Stewart, John Dall, and Farley Granger; and "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1956, Hitchcock), with Stewart and Doris Day.
Nov. 13-14: "Diva" (†); and "King of Hearts" (1967, Philippe de Broca; in French and English), with Alan Bates.
Nov. 15: "Mad Max" (1979, George Miller), with Mel Gibson; and "The Road Warrior" (1982, Miller), with Gibson.
Nov. 16: "Red Desert" (1964, Michelangelo Antonioni; in Italian), with Monica Vitti and Richard Harris; and "Blow-Up" (1966, Antonioni), with Vanessa Redgrave and David Hemmings.
Nov. 17: "Jezebel" (1938, William Wyler), with Bette Davis, Henry Fonda, George Brent, and Fay Bainter; and "The Letter" (1940, Wyler), with Davis and Herbert Marshall.
Nov. 18: "Séance on a Wet Afternoon" (1964, Bryan Forbes), with Kim Stanley and Richard Attenborough; and "Whistle Down the Wind" (†).

Tribeca Cinema, 41 White St. (925-2570)
Through Nov. 10: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (1990, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish); and "High Heels" (1991, Almodóvar; in Spanish).
Nov. 11-12: "The Long, Hot Summer" (1958, Martin Ritt), with Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Anthony Franciosa, Orson Welles, Lee Remick, and Angela Lansbury; and "The Three Faces of Eve" (1957, Nunnally Johnson), with Woodward, David Wayne, and Lee J. Cobb.



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GERARD NICOLAS

Nov. 13-14: "Fellini's Roma" (1972, Federico Fellini; in Italian); and "Fellini Satyricon" (1970, Fellini; in Italian).

Nov. 15: "The Leopard" (1963, Luchino Visconti), with Burt Lancaster, Alain Delon, Claudia Cardinale, Paolo Stoppa, and Rina Morelli.

Nov. 16-17: "GoodFellas" (Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Ray Liotta, Joe Pesci, Lorraine Bracco, and Paul Sorvino; and "The Grifters" (Stephen Frears), with Anjelica Huston, John Cusack, and Annette Bening.

From Nov. 18: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (James Ivory), with Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Blythe Danner, Simon Callow, Kyra Sedgwick, and Robert Sean Leonard; and "No Down Payment" (1957, Martin Ritt), with Woodward, Jeffrey Hunter, Sheree North, and Tony Randall.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Nov. 9 at 2:30 and Nov. 14 at 2: "Lolita" (1962, directed by Stanley Kubrick), with Sue Lyon, James Mason, Peter Sellers, and Shelley Winters. . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 3: "Le Rapport Darty" (1989, Jean-Luc Godard; in French). . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 6: "A Heart of Stone" (1992, Claude Sautet, in French), with Daniel Auteuil, Emmanuelle Béart, and André Dussolier. . . . ¶ Nov. 9 at 6:30: A program of films by Lynne Sachs. . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 2:30 and Nov. 14 at 5: "The Open Mouth" (1974, Maurice Pialat; in French), with Monique Mélinard, Nathalie Baye, and Philippe Léotard. . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 3 and 6: "South of Wawa" (1991, Robert Boyd), with Rebecca Jenkins, Scott Renderer, and Andrew Miller. . . . ¶ Nov. 10 at 6 and Nov. 15 at 5: "Street Smart" (1987, Jerry Schatzberg), with Christopher Reeve, Morgan Freeman, and Kathy Baker. . . . ¶ Nov. 11 at 2:30 and 6: "Playtime" (1967, Jacques Tati), with Tati. . . . ¶ Nov. 12 at 2:30 and Nov. 15 at 2: "Sans Soleil" (see below). . . . ¶ Nov. 12 at 3 and 6: "Not Just Good Times Sunday" (1991, Gary Keys), a documentary. . . . ¶ Nov. 12 at 6 and Nov. 13 at 2:30: "The Visitors" (1972, Elia Kazan), with James Woods, Patrick McVey, and Patricia Joyce. . . . ¶ Nov. 13 at 3: The Swiss television version of "Every Man for Himself" (1979, Godard; in French, no English subtitles). . . . ¶ Nov. 13 at 6: "After Hours" (†). . . . ¶ Nov. 13 at 6: "Hail Mary" (1985, Godard; in French). . . . ¶ Nov. 14-15 at 2: "Six Times Two" (1976, Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville; in French). . . . ¶ Nov. 16 at 2:30 and Nov. 17 at 6: "The Unfaithful" (1947, Vincent Sherman), with Ann Sheridan, Lew Ayres, and Zachary Scott. . . . ¶ Nov. 16 at 6: "Nora Prentiss" (1947, Sherman), with Sheridan, Kent Smith, and Robert Alda. . . . ¶ Nov. 17 at 2:30: "Possessed" (†).

MOVIES IN BRIEF

SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

Shadow Dance

The avant-garde film "Sans Soleil" (playing November 12 and 15, at the Museum of Modern Art) is funny and intellectually exhilarating. The auteur behind this poetic 1982 documentary collage is Chris Marker, the innovative Frenchman best known here for "La Jetée" and "The Koumiko Mystery." It's narrated by a fictional cinematographer named Sandor Krasna, who wanders through Africa and his favorite country, Japan, seeking out the root beliefs and rituals that might make it possible for people to feel part of a natural historical continuity, even in a technological age.

Krasna has hatched a plot for a sci-fi movie: a fortieth-century man attempts to discover the meaning of Mussorgsky's "Sunless" song cycle, which still exists in his century but is no longer comprehensible. Like Krasna (and Krasna's hero), Marker is the opposite of obscure; he's trying to elucidate the crossed signals of our own time. He finds precise movie equivalents for perception and memory. His montage of Japanese rail travellers and the violent, sexy, silly cartoon and movie images that flit through their minds is the most clearheaded evocation you're likely to see of fragmented contemporary consciousness.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

After Hours (1985)—Martin Scorsese directed, and his work here is lively and companionable; the camera scoots around, making jokes—or, at least, near-jokes. But this skittish paranoid fantasy is just a classroom exercise of a movie: elegant, crisp, and flashy, with perky zooms and cute little dissolves. Scorsese uses his skills (and even his personality) like a hired hand, making a vacuous, polished piece of consumer goods—all surface. Griffin Dunne plays a young word-processor operator in midtown New York, who goes down to SoHo for a date and finds himself trapped in a nightmare world, where he has to contend with one flaky, threatening woman after another: Rosanna Arquette, Linda Fiorentino, Teri Garr, Catherine O'Hara, and Verna Bloom. The cast includes John Heard, who gives the movie its only rooted moments, and Cheech and Chong, Dick Miller, and Bronson Pinchot. Cinematography by Michael Ballhaus; script by Joseph Minion.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 13.)

Bob Roberts—Tim Robbins is the writer, director, and star of this mock documentary that chronicles, C-SPAN style, the senatorial campaign of a young radical-right demagogue. Bob Roberts is a folksinger: instead of giving speeches, he picks up an acoustic guitar and invites his audiences to sing along with his reactionary "protest" anthems. He's Pat Buchanan in Woody Guthrie's clothing, and what's scary about the movie is that this grotesque coupling doesn't even feel like a stretch. Robbins tosses off nasty satiric riffs at a reckless, headlong pace, and the movie, even at its most chilling, is hilarious; its humor is both precise enough to deflate its targets and goofy enough to feel liberating. And his performance as smiling Bob, although it's conceived as a caricature, is never tiresome: it's too finely detailed, and too gleeful. This terrifically entertaining movie represents something very unlikely and very welcome: liberal humor with sharp teeth. Also with Gore Vidal, Alan Rickman, Giancarlo Esposito, Brian Murray, and Ray Wise. The songs are by Tim Robbins and his brother, David.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/7/92.) (Gramercy, Plaza, 86th Street East Twin, Quad Cinema, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Bram Stoker's Dracula—With Gary Oldman, Winona Ryder, Anthony Hopkins, Keanu Reeves, and Sadie Frost; directed by Francis Ford Coppola. (See illustration on page 28.) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Bay Cinema, Tower East, Orpheum VII, 62nd &. Broadway, and Astor Plaza; starting Nov. 13.)

A Brief History of Time—Errol Morris's inspirational documentary essay about the physicist Stephen Hawking is a cross between a puff piece and a gee-whiz science special. The movie is even more abstract than it has to be, and it's remarkably soft-edged. In the biographical sections, Morris sketches Hawking as a wayward boy wonder who focusses his talents only after he's stricken with Lou Gehrig's disease. As far as characterization goes, that's it. There's some curiosity but no depth in the director's depiction of eccentric British intellectuals; he treats his interviewees as if he were pinning them to specimen boards, except that he doesn't name or identify them. Morris presents Hawking's ironic contrasts between human mortality and the life span of the universe with such hushed awe that he robs them of their delectability. (The familiar ripple of Philip Glass's music doesn't help.) By the end, the film disappears into its own cranium.—M.S. (9/7/92) (Village East Cinemas. . . . ¶ Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; through Nov. 12.)

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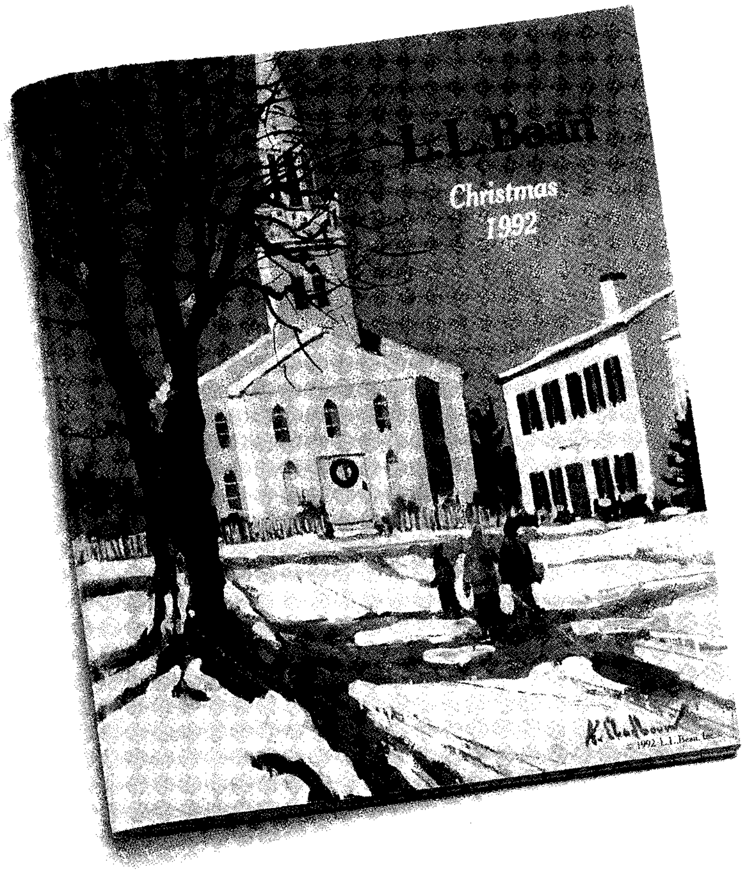

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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

Candyman—An intrepid female graduate student ventures into Chicago's inner city, camera in hand, and falls prey to a bogeyman who carves up disbelievers with a hook. The academic is that mischievous-eyed blonde Virginia Madsen, and the Candyman (Tony Todd) is black; the racial brinkmanship is the film's most original and effective gimmick. Madsen gives a juicy B-picture performance, throwing herself into each absurd display of hubris, but the movie is just a gory campfire tale. To generate any genuine fun, it needs to be seen in a city, at midnight. The writer-director, Bernard Rose, adapted Clive Barker's short story, "The Forbidden."—M.S. (10/19/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Olympia; through Nov. 12. . . . ¶ Gemini; through Nov. 17.)

Diva (1981)—A glittering toy of a movie, a romantic thriller from France, made by the director Jean-Jacques Beineix who has a fabulous camera technique and understands the pleasures to be had from a picture that doesn't take itself too seriously—the whole high-tech incandescence of the film is played for humor. The diva is an awesomely beautiful black American soprano (Wilhelmenia Fernandez) who refuses to make recordings. Frédéric Andrei is the wide-eyed eighteen-year-old postal messenger who adores her; he sneaks his Nagra tape machine into her concert in Paris so he'll be able to listen to her at home—and all hell breaks loose around him. He's pursued by two baroque thugs: one is tall and Latin and chews gum with the jaws of a hippopotamus; the other (Dominique Pinon) is small, with spiky blond hair and sunglasses, and an earplug so he can listen to a transistor radio while he's on his murderous errands—he's so dissociated he's practically a mutant. The unfazable heroine (the fourteen-year-old Thuy An Luu) is a post-Godardian tootsie—in her short-short skirts and transparent plastic coat, she's a lollipop wrapped in cellophane. A man named Gorodish (Richard Bohringer), a Mr. Cool in a white suit and a white Citroën, comes to the aid of the besieged messenger. The film may remind you of Welles' "Touch of Evil"; it's Welles romanticized, packaged. It's a mixture of style and chic hanky-panky, but its genuinely sparkling. The screenplay by Beineix and Jean Van Hamme is based on a novel by Delacorta (a pseudonym for Daniel Odier, who also writes under his own name); the cinematography is by Philippe Rousselot. In French.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Nov. 13-14.)

Glengarry Glen Ross—David Mamet's 1984 Pulitzer Prize-winner—about real-estate salesmen who put the screws on hapless marks in order to keep their own ugly jobs—made ripping theatre, whatever else it was or wasn't. But the movie, set in the lean Bush years, spells out the characters' despair in cue cards, right from the start, and hammers away at the plot so relentlessly that you can feel the nails entering the back of your skull. Still, the performers provide relief. Ed Harris and Alan Arkin, as the sleek yet panicky Moss and the sad-sack Aaronow, turn their "Are we speaking or are we talking?" duet into an existential Abbott-and-Costello number. Al Pacino, as Roma, Mamet's Mr. Slick, is amusingly lordly: he's simultaneously high-handed and underhanded. And Kevin Spacey, as their steely office manager, Williamson, plants a daringly long fuse and ignites it with the smallest flicker. Only Jack Lemmon, as Shelley (the Machine) Levene, disappoints: he starts strong, but the director, James Foley, lets him drown in unearned emotion, as if this were Lemmon's shot at "Death of a Salesman." Mamet did his own adaptation, adding another ruthless person to the melodrama: a head-office hit man played by Alec Baldwin.—M.S. (10/5/92) (Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and 57th St. Playhouse. . . . ¶ Village Theatre VII; through Nov. 12.)

Hero—Stephen Frears' new movie often feels like a remake of something from the thirties or forties. Its plot premise—an ordinary man is lionized by the media for a courageous act he didn't perform, and the actual hero can't get anyone to see the truth—provides the sort of material that Preston Sturges and Frank Capra liked to work with. And the script, an original by David Webb Peoples (who also wrote "Unforgiven"), even borrows from John Ford: in a sense, this picture is a screwball-comedy take on "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance." The movie is fascinating to watch, but most of the time you're sitting there wondering why this ingeniously constructed script isn't playing better. Simply stated, Peoples hasn't written many funny lines, and Frears' attempts to create comic business visually feel strained and unspontaneous. The filmmakers fail to supply the incidental pleasures and the joyous sense of immediacy that screwball farce—even ironic, subversive screwball farce—can't do without. Dustin Hoffman, who plays the real hero, doesn't get any kind of rhythm going until the movie is almost over; and Andy Garcia, as the faker, can't quite rise above his cryptically written role. But Geena Davis, as a hot-shot TV reporter, is smashing: she strikes a lovely balance between warmth and satiric precision, and holds it in the midst of the general chaos.—T.R. (10/5/92) (Baronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Olympia, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Bay Cinema; through Nov. 12.)

The Last of the Mohicans—In Michael Mann's version of James Fenimore Cooper's improbably durable tall tale, everybody looks great: the movie seduces us with haircuts and landscape. The hero of this melodramatic story of pre-Revolutionary America is Hawkeye (Daniel Day-Lewis), a rugged but sensitive individualist who roams the forest of the Hudson Valley in the company of two Indians, Chingachgook (Russell Means) and Uncas (Eric Schweig). The three men serve as guides and bodyguards for Cora and Alice Munro (Madeleine Stowe and Jodhi May), the maidenly daughters of a British officer. The Brits are at war with the French, but the greatest danger to Anglo-Saxon life and limb is posed by a band of bloodthirsty Indian guerrillas, led by a wily Huron named Magua (Wes Studi). The setup pretty much guarantees thrills, and Mann delivers the action-movie goods, but with a sort of abstract, lyrical pictorialism. Day-Lewis's Hawkeye—a cultured white man's dream of virile primitivism—is almost entirely a visual phenomenon, and it works. (He runs well, and sports a terrific mane of straight, stringy alternative-rocker hair.) The picture is awfully, solemnly silly, but it's enjoyable and even rather stirring.—T.R. (10/5/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

The Lover—With Jane March and Tony Leung, directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Fine Arts.)

de Michiell

Joan Crawford in "Possessed"

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

Mr. Saturday Night—Having your joke and eating it, too—that's what Billy Crystal manages to pull off, repeatedly, in this sprawling, laughing-through-tears extravaganza (his directorial début). As Buddy Young, Jr., whom he created ten years ago and developed on "Saturday Night Live" and HBO specials, Crystal pays homage to the Borscht Belt masters of disrespect who brought their tumultuous brand of vulgar, irreverent clowning into the American mainstream during the Golden Age of Television. The Buddy of this movie is sharper and funnier than his previous incarnations: at times, he's a showcase for Crystal's own crack wit and inventiveness. Crystal and his co-writers (Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel) aim to get behind the ironic mask of this Yiddish harlequin and reveal the fierce ambition and bitterness that fuel his put-downs. Crystal is fairly tough about Buddy's self-destructive drive and his parasitic relationship with his brother and right-hand man, Stan (David Paymer). But he also wants to honor Jewish roots, building to a family-reconciliation finish. What saves the film from terminal mawkishness is the chemistry between Crystal and that remarkable actor, Paymer. Crystal's Buddy is always pitching, sometimes wildly. Paymer's Stan is always catching, and, in a subtle, self-abnegating way, calling the shots. With Julie Warner, Mary Maya, Helen Hunt, and Ron Silver.—M.S. (10/5/92) (First & 62nd Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

My New Gun—The heroine of Stacy Cochran's movie is a young New Jersey housewife named Debbie Bender (Diane Lane), whose husband buys her a revolver she doesn't want. This husband, Gerald (Stephen Collins), is a smug radiologist who dominates his wife completely: when he announces that the Bender household—a condo overlooking a golf course—needs a firearm, that's it. Cochran's screenplay delights in fouling up the audience's expectations. It constructs a kind of inverted pyramid of unlikeliness, the whole thing balanced, precariously, on the initial absurdity of Gerald's decision. The real subject of the picture is Debbie's changing relationship to the circumstances of her life, and especially her marriage. The gun itself is a little more than a

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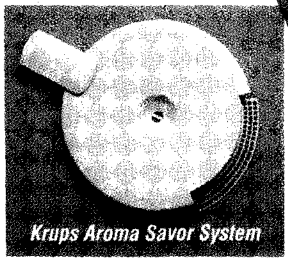

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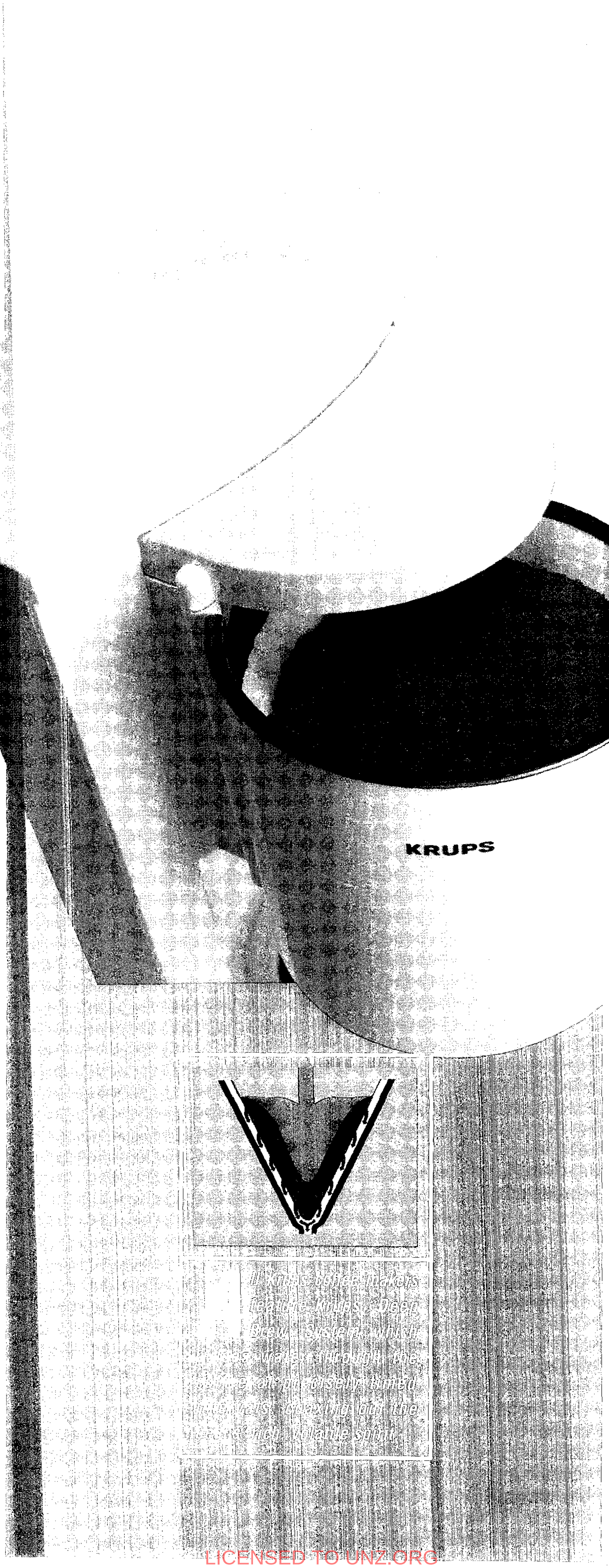

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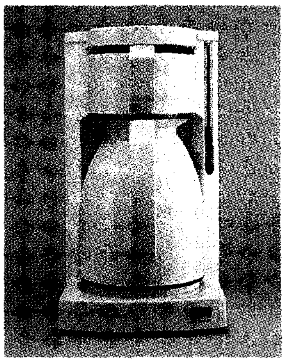

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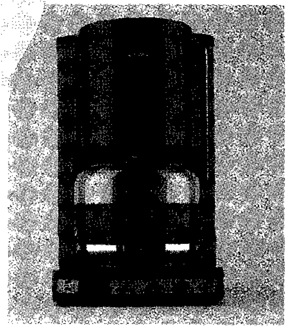

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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

pretext and a lot less than a symbol: it serves mostly to get her involved in the mysterious life of her across-the-street neighbor, Skippy (James LeGros), a scruffy, shifty-eyed young man who has a big crush on her. LeGros is wonderfully sly and seductive, and Diane Lane's delicately funny performance conveys the movie's exploratory sensibility with thrilling clarity: she makes us feel the risky joy of venturing beyond your own narrow plot and becoming a part of someone else's story. Cochran—a recent film-school graduate—gives the dull suburban setting a surprising richness and beauty. Her condoland isn't a satirist's world, or a cartoonist's, or a fairy-tale teller's; it's more like a novelist's. Yet the sort of liberation that this picture proposes, and embodies, is the product of a true filmmaker's vision. Ed Lachman's cinematography is terrific.—T.R. (11/2/92) (Angelika Film Center.)

Night and the City—A remake, directed by Irwin Winkler and written by Richard Price, of Jules Dassin's terrific 1950 film noir. The filmmakers and their star, Robert De Niro, try to tap the Scorsese vein of kinetic urban violence, out-of-control male energy, and brooding, pessimistic wit. Everyone involved in the picture has a formidable résumé, but what they've put on the screen is wan, washed-out, blurry—a photocopy of a fax of a carbon of something that was once clear and bold. As in the original film, the story is about a small-time hustler who foolishly invades the turf of a powerful sports promoter and is decisively slapped down for his efforts. Price and Winkler make only the most glancing attempt to re-create the tone of Dassin's movie; they turn the story into a comedy about a lovable loser, a New York motor-mouth who is supposed to charm us with his indefatigable optimism. Winkler moves the camera constantly, fills the soundtrack with old rock and roll and R. & B., and tries hard to create a gritty atmosphere of low-life New York desperation, but everything he does looks mechanical, as if it had been learned by rote. Price's deft verbal riffing is just decorative. And De Niro's performance, in a role that Richard Widmark played brilliantly in the 1950 version, produces a perfect vacuum at the center of the picture. Also with Jessica Lange, Cliff Gorman, Alan King, Jack Warden, and Eli Wallach.—T.R. (10/19/92) (Coronet, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 62nd & Broadway; through Nov. 12.)

Of Mice and Men—The director and co-star, Gary Sinise, has been quoted as saying, "I saw the 1939 film version and it was such a product of its time that it meant nothing to me. I thought Lon Chaney, Jr., was real hammy." Actually, Lewis Milestone's version of John Steinbeck's tragic fable, with Burgess Meredith as the shrewd ranch hand George and Chaney as the simple giant Lennie, is a wonderfully wrought classic. This new movie, adapted by Horton Foote—with Sinise as George and John Malkovich as Lennie—is the one that goes high on the hog. Led by Sinise, who edges his profile into every shot as if he were a model in a rustic-clothing catalogue, and Malkovich, who carries on like a further infantilized Tommy Smothers (his upper register recalls Tweety Pie), the cast acts with self-conscious, surface physicality. Ray Walston fits right in with the histrionics on this film's Steppenwolf Ranch; even Joe Morton catches the overacting bug. At least Casey Siemaszko is down-to-earth as the bully, Curley, but for all the talk of humanizing his flirty wife, Sinise hangs Sherilyn Fenn out to dry. The only restrained performance is given by Lennie's pup.—M.S. (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Waverly, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Possessed (1947)—" 'I love you' is such an inadequate way of saying I love you," the impassioned Joan Crawford murmurs to her sweetheart (Van Heflin). When Heflin, who is an engineer as well as a coldhearted lady-killer, points out, in a passage of technological ecstasy, that he finds a girder he has devised more beautiful than Miss Crawford, she whimpers, "Why don't you love me like that? I'm a lot nicer than a girder." Heflin can't see it her way, and presently, in despair, she marries Raymond Massey, a big oil man with a lively daughter (Geraldine Brooks). Watching Heflin fall in love with her stepdaughter proves too much for Crawford, who comes down with a case of schizophrenia that really rattles the walls of the Massey homestead. Then psychiatrists take her in tow. In terms of suspense, this picture, directed by Curtis Bernhardt, is often very striking, and, clearly, he and the cast are doing their damnedest. Insanity is used, in the usual forties Hollywood manner, to provide an excuse for high-on-the-hog melodrama; there isn't a trace of believability—that's part of what makes it enjoyable. With Stanley Ridges, Moroni Olsen, John Ridgely, and Monte Blue. The script by Sylvia Richards and Ranald MacDougall is based on Rita Weiman's "One Man's Secret."—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Nov. 17.)

The Public Eye—Inspired by the tabloid-news photographer Weegee, this oddball reverie, set in New York circa 1942, is gorgeous and disappointing. It gets rolling early, then stops cold. When Barbara Hershey, the widow of a fancy-nightclub owner, gets Joe Pesci, a notorious, artistic shutterbug, to investigate a mystery man, the audience is eager to see his hardscrabble vision of life put to use in detective work. But the writer-director, Howard Franklin, comes up with a suspense plot that bogs down in details. While just about all the actors make good impressions—including Pesci, who imbues the hero with acute street reflexes and surprising sensitivity—only Stanley Tucci, as a low-level mobster, and Jerry Adler, as a self-loathing columnist turned playwright, tap any subterranean emotions. What sustains the movie is Franklin's loving, complex evocation of the period; the real world and the photo world bleed into each other, sometimes literally. Peter Suschitzky did the sumptuous, dark-toned cinematography.—M.S. (10/19/92) (Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas; through Nov. 10. . . . ¶ 34th St. East, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Art Greenwich Twin; through Nov. 12.)

Reservoir Dogs—Most of the action in Quentin Tarantino's pulp crime movie takes place in a cavernous warehouse, to which the surviving participants of a botched jewelry heist have repaired to lick their wounds. The crooks amuse themselves by accusing each other of treachery (*someone* tipped off the police), waving their guns, screaming obscenities, and torturing a cop whom one of them has captured. This is, explicitly, a man's world. Tarantino emphasizes the characters' absurdity; they're all presented as demented children, little boys with big guns. He wants us to feel as if we had crack-landed in an alternate universe: the Planet of the Goons. The movie runs on film-school cleverness—a homemade pharmaceutical cocktail of pop music, visual jolts, and allusions to Scorsese and Peckinpah. As supercool young directors go, Tarantino (whose first film this is) is fairly engaging: his nihilism is antic and oddly cheery. But the picture is less than the sum of its outrageous gags and inventive bits of business. This is a reasonably lively picture about nothing, and that's apparently just what it was meant to be. With Harvey Keitel, Tim Roth, Steve Buscemi, Michael Madsen, Lawrence Tierney, and Chris Penn.—T.R. (10/19/92) (Village Theatre VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

A River Runs Through It—Robert Redford's movie of Norman Maclean's lyrical novella about fly-fishing and family loyalty in Montana is serene, lulling, tranquil—no, it's dead dull. Maclean's story traces the history of its narrator's relationship with his self-destructive kid brother, Paul, through detailed descriptions of their fishing trips; the narrative is driven by the tension between what it's telling us and what it's leaving out. Disastrously, Redford and screenwriter Richard Friedenberg open up the story. They show us too much of what's happening offstage—that is, away from the river—and thus allow the real source of the story's emotions to dissipate. With a delicately balanced narrative like this one, more is inevitably less. The movie is ravishingly shot (by Philippe Rousselot), but it's lifeless, because it lacks the vital spirit of Maclean's writing: the precision and grace that he seems to have learned, in part, from fly-fishing. Redford and Friedenberg try to catch the story's elusive meanings by lobbing grenades into the river and blowing everything in it out into the light of day. With Craig Sheffer as the narrator, Norman, and Brad Pitt (who looks like a young Redford and gives a lightweight performance) as Paul. The supporting cast includes Emily Lloyd, Tom Skerritt, Stephen Shellen, Nicole Burdette, Brenda Blethyn, and Susan Traylor.—T.R. (10/19/92) (Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, and Columbus Circle.)

Singles—Cameron Crowe's second film as a writer-director (the first was the lovely 1989 teen comedy "Say Anything") is a buoyant, sweet-tempered little picture about the romantic confusions of some young Seattle apartment-dwellers. It's an ensemble piece, the sort of movie that flits from character to character like a hummingbird. Crowe's touch is so light that you may, in the end, feel a bit unsatisfied—disappointed that the movie's buzzing comic vitality starts to lose its resonance the moment you leave the theatre. This is romantic comedy of the wispiest kind, but the picture is generous, graceful, and consistently funny. Campbell Scott and Kyra Sedgwick play Steve and Linda, idealistic yuppies in love, and both prove to be wonderfully deft comedians. And Matt Dillon, as Cliff, the rather dim leader of a band called Citizen Dick, is hilarious. But the standout in Crowe's energetic cast is Bridget Fonda, who plays Janet, a bubbly underachiever inexplicably smitten with Cliff. Fonda is a true original: she brings such reckless, joyous abandon to Janet's pursuit of the unlikely object of desire that she transforms this desperate-love story line into something exuberantly optimistic. This movie shows that Cameron Crowe is a rare bird, too: a sunny realist.—T.R. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and 23rd St. West Triplex.)

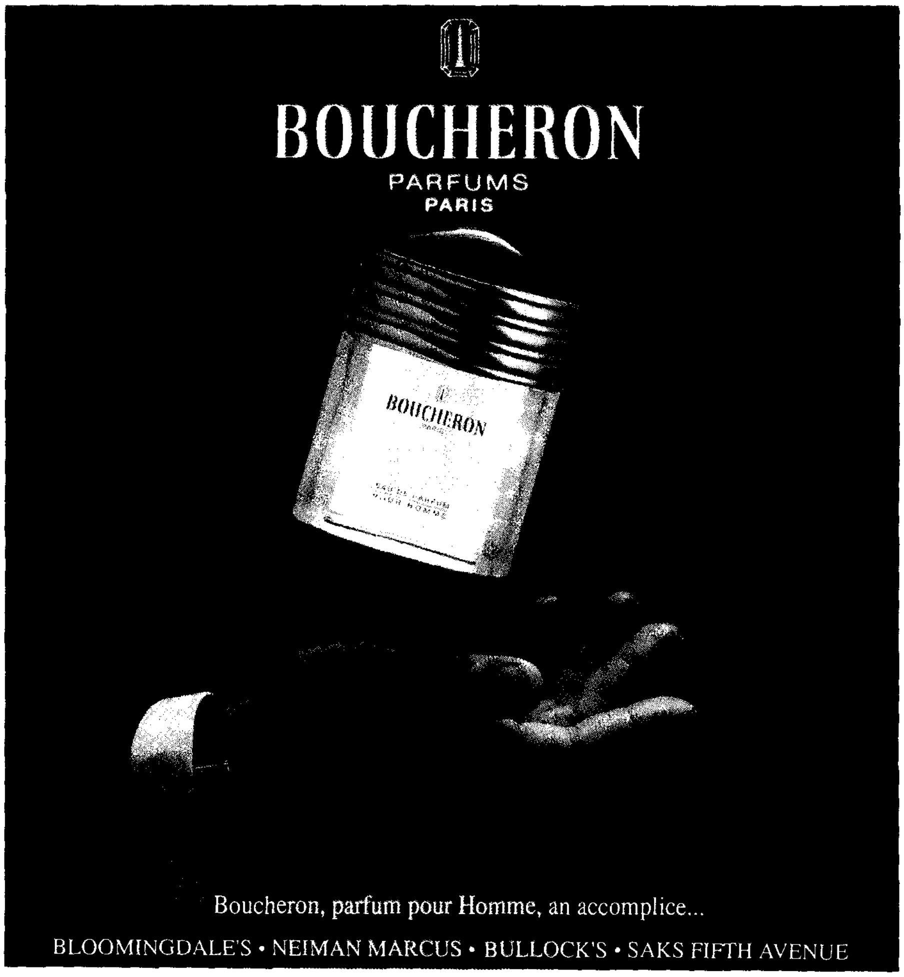
South Central—Tossed into theatres without publicity, this is a tough-minded and affecting melodrama. It sees life in the 'hood as a survival drama, plain and simple, and pleads for family responsibility and nonviolence as its inhabitants' last chance. The writer-director, Steve Anderson, and his key players—Glenn Plummer and Bryon Keith Minns as gang leaders, Carl Lumbly as Plummer's jailhouse mentor, and Christian Coleman as Plummer's ten-year-old son—give their three-act story stouthearted conviction. They try to flash a warning signal about the dead-end values of gang life and at the same time leave viewers with an inspirational message about the power of paternal love. Despite some bald didactic stretches, they succeed.—M.S. (11/2/92) (Criterion Center; through Nov. 17.)

Under Siege—With Steven Seagal, Tommy Lee Jones, and Gary Busey; directed by Andrew Davis. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Gemini; through Nov. 17.)

Waterland—Tom Crick (Jeremy Irons), the protagonist and narrator of Stephen Gyllenhaal's film, is a middle-aged history teacher immobilized by his own past—by the dire events of his wartime adolescence in the fen country of East Anglia. The 1983 novel, by Graham Swift, from which the picture has been adapted is a determinedly inward-looking work: unpromising material for a film. And this hero—a hopeless, defeated, rumpled-corduroy man, marking time as he slides inexorably toward decrepitude and merciful oblivion—isn't the sort that movie audiences tend to clasp to their bosoms. Yet the picture is, in its gray way, absorbing and often moving. The screenwriter, Peter Prince, has streamlined the novel's twisty narrative very intelligently. (He retains the book's juiciest, most lurid episodes.) Gyllenhaal's direction is occasionally too studied, but it has some drive. And the actors are awfully good. Grant Warnock and Lena Headey, the young performers who play Tom and his wife-to-be in flashback sequences, bring a convincing and touching adolescent gravity to their roles. Irons imparts a whiff of something like madness to his character's middle-aged desperation, and thus saves it from seeming just another incarnation of the dull, low-horizon resignation familiar to audiences of English films and fiction about educated losers. His performance lifts the movie to the top of the rueful-retrospection class. Also with Sinead Cusack.—T.R. (11/2/92) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Whistle Down the Wind (1961)—Although the story about a group of children who discover a murderer hiding in their barn and take him for Jesus Christ is a modern parallel of Christ's progress to the cross, this English film isn't nearly as embarrassing and sickly as that sounds. The directing, writing, and acting are all better than the basic idea. In some peculiar double-edged way the movie is both satirical and straight; Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, who adapted Mary Hayley Bell's novel, kidded the idea in a way that almost makes the idea work. "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning" began with the working-class hero in a machine shop counting "900 and 90-bloody-9"; in this picture, a six-year-old boy, every bit as cynical as that hero, attacks his morning boiled egg with a muttered "178." Though the central figure is Hayley Mills, who gives her standard lip-licking performance, she isn't offensive and you can forget about her. The pleasures of the film relate to the egg-eater—the ancient-looking Alan Barnes—and to Diane Holgate, who has unbelievably old, all-seeing, beautiful eyes, and to the dozens of amazing unchildish children who keep filling the screen. They're already wearing the faces they'll be wearing for the rest of their lives, and the startlingly sensible lines they speak are as good as just about anything in English movies of the period. The director, Bryan Forbes, makes them perhaps the least sentimental collection of children you've ever seen in a film, and when the disillusioned egg-eater says, "He's not Jesus. He's just a feller," he's amazingly like that working-class hero with his "What I'm out for is a good time. All the rest is propaganda." With Alan Bates and Bernard Lee.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Nov. 18.)

Zebrahead—This interracial teen romance set in Detroit makes a fumbling plea for integration and tolerance. For about forty minutes, you're willing to go along with its loose style and predictable storytelling, partly because of the fresh young cast and novel Motor City locations, and partly because the writer-director, Anthony Drazan, suggests that there could be a lasting bond between his Jewish Romeo, Zack (Michael Rapaport), and his black Juliet, Nikki (N'Bushe Wright). But even the early sequences show evidence of trickle-down portentousness. And when Zack's white ex-girlfriend invites him and Nikki to an otherwise all-white party, the movie begins a downward spiral into West Side Story-land. In a mere hundred minutes, the director takes two likable, potentially complex characters and reduces them to poster kids promoting racial understanding. With standout support from the charismatic Ray Sharkey as Zack's widowed, randy dad, and Ron Johnson as a volatile hoodlum named Nut.—M.S. (11/2/92) (Village East Cinemas, Eastside Cinema, and Embassy.)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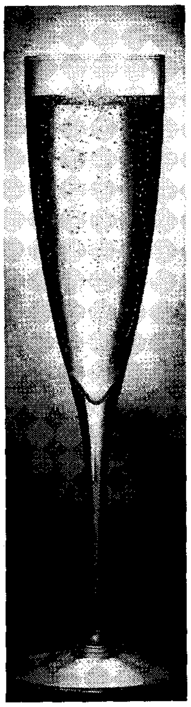

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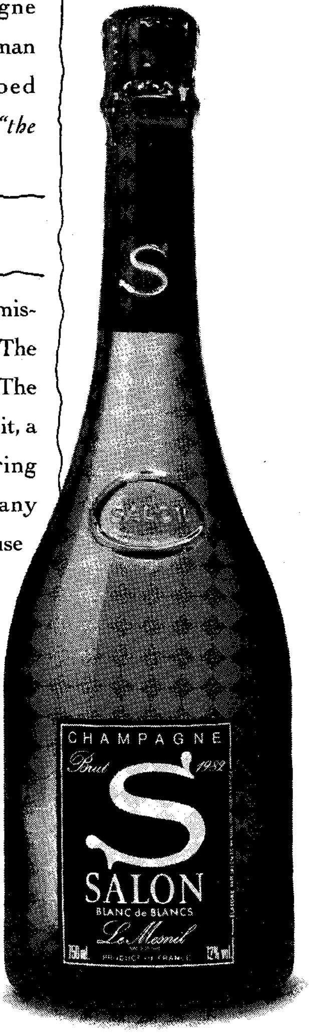

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

HEEERE'S BILL!

Is it the President-elect's first serious mistake? He is reported to have promised to appear on CNN's "Larry King Live" at least once every six months while he is in the White House. The source of this information is the celebrated talk-show host himself, so we have to believe it. But how rash of Bill Clinton to make such a promise! He will be reviled either for keeping it or for breaking it. Still, the wise course will be for him to break it, unless he agrees with Ross Perot that Larry King has the most important job in America—not an opinion that any President is likely to hold about a mere television interviewer, even about one who has acted as a public father-confessor to all three candidates during a Presidential campaign. The dignity of the Presidency is at stake here.

After finishing his Election Night show, Larry King sat in his Washington studio ruminating on his own glorious campaign. "I lived a decade in a year," he said. "I've been all over the front pages, seen my face bent out of shape in cartoons, heard my name in the conversations of strangers." He repeated a story he likes to tell about a visit to the Western Wall of Jerusalem. "I'd never been there, and I was excited," he said. "My fingers were touching the brick, and next to me a hunched-over old rabbi was praying. He was chanting and rocking. But suddenly the old man looks up and asks me, 'What's with Perot?' "

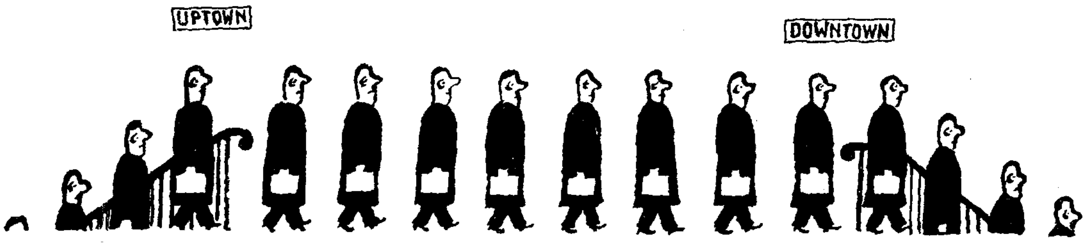
This is heady stuff, but Mr. King maintains he will not be depressed by returning to a diet of starlets and baseball managers now that the campaign is over. As he says this, he presses a remote-control button, and Ross Perot appears on a screen across the room, conceding defeat in that familiar Texas twang. "I'll miss him," Mr. King says, putting on his spectacles for a better look. "Say what you will, by coming on my show Perot really opened the system." It was, of course, on the Larry King show last February that Mr. Perot announced his readiness to compete for the highest office in the land, and then, last July, explained his sudden decision to pull out. The Perot challenge lured the other candidates into Larry King's electronic arena.

One of the things the candidates had to do was answer random questions telephoned in during the show—a familiar practice on radio but something of a novelty on television. Mr. King is not so surprised by the willingness of politicians to take such questions as he is by the patience of callers who will cheerfully listen to busy signals for an hour in the hope—unfulfilled more often than not—of speaking to somebody for less than a minute. Still, he believes that getting through is the least important part of the ritual. "Just knowing you can call and yell at an elected official makes the whole world seem somehow closer," he claims—although some might feel that calling and calling and never getting through could have an alienating effect.

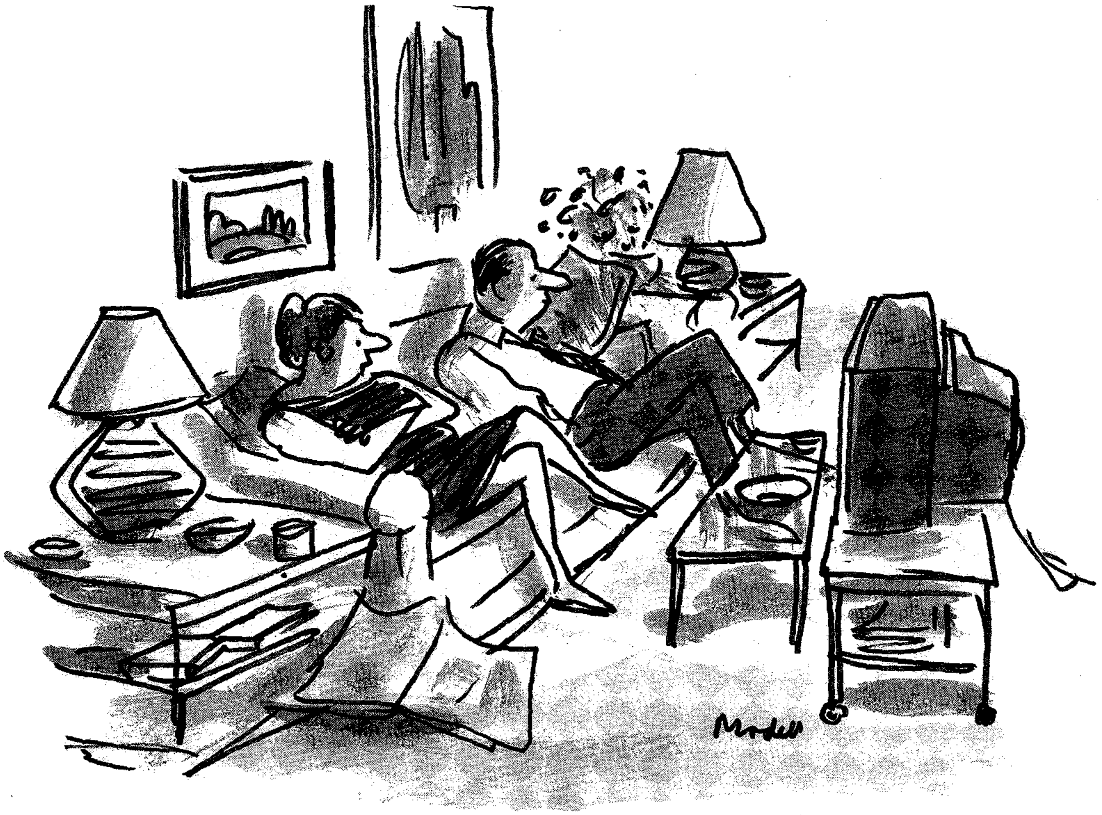
So Mr. King is a fortunate human being—one who can face with equanimity the eventual dimming of the limelight. "Besides, I'm excited about Bill Clinton," he says. "Clinton comes easy into a space. He's equally at home in a radio studio and in a Senate chamber and on the bandstand of the 'Arsenio Hall Show.' He sets everyone at ease. In fact, Clinton would make a fine talk-show host." Mr. Clinton should be reassured to know that if he messes it up in the White House he will still be qualified to do what Mr. Perot regards as the most important job in America.

HANDS DOWN

The moment when everybody in Little Rock knew for certain that Bill Clinton would be the next President was the moment when his chief campaign strategist, James Carville, appeared in public without gloves. Carville, an intensely superstitious fellow, is always looking for new ways to keep the gods on his side. During the final days of the election campaign, he decided—only he knows why—that the best way of doing this would be to put on a pair of skintight black gloves and keep them on un-



ANDRZEJ CZECZOT



"I think Gergen and Shields were more fun before the election."

• •

til the election. He had been wearing them for several days when, in the early afternoon of Election Day, he suddenly emerged bare-handed from his campaign home—Little Rock's Capital Hotel. This was long before the polls had closed, and while the television networks were intent on keeping the suspense alive, continuing to suggest that the result could be close. But anybody who knew Carville would also have known that nothing in the world could have persuaded him to abandon his wretched gloves except absolute certainty that Clinton would beat Bush. The sight of Carville gloveless was proof, if proof were needed, of how the media were pretending all that day to be a great deal more ignorant than in fact they were. Like Carville, the television people had seen the exit polls that made a Clinton victory inevitable, but, unlike him, they shiftily kept their gloves on.

IS THE PARTY OVER?

LINGERING in the Crystal Ballroom of the Grand Kempinski Hotel in North Dallas, after the hot-dog stands had been rolled away and the Dixieland jazz band had packed up its banjos, was the unresolved question of the future of Ross Perot and his nascent political party, United We Stand, America. The candidate seemed eager to concede, bounding to the podium forty-five minutes before the polls closed in California. He looked happier in defeat than he had at any point since his quixotic campaign began, thereby confirming the impression received by many of his friends that he hadn't really wanted to win in the first place.

"We will have our organization established," Perot told his supporters. "We have a nationwide network, a state-by-state network, a community-by-community network, and we will keep it intact to be a force for constructive good throughout our country." Exactly what form that organization will take is still unknown. The supporters who crowded the ballroom to hear the candidate's last speech were themselves divided over whether United We Stand, America should become a full-blown third party, with its own slate of candidates for state and national offices, or some sort of public-interest pressure group, or just a national drum for Perot to beat whenever he has a complaint. "I don't think you'd want to call it a party," one of his supporters said in alarm. "Most of us here have said quite clearly that we're tired of the party system. That's just politics as usual." On the other hand, Admiral James Stockdale, Perot's running mate, observed that a third party was overdue in this country. The real legacy of Perot's candidacy, Stockdale said, besides proving that "you don't have to talk to Sam Donaldson to get on TV," was the creation of an alternative to the Republicans and the Democrats. "Let's think of this as a historic night," Stockdale told the crowd. "Keep your eye on United We Stand."

Certainly Orson Swindle, the executive director of United We Stand, America has plans for the organization. "Are we going to keep this thing going?" he said the day after the election. "In all candor, there's no way we can stop it." After Perot spent more than sixty million dollars on one fruitless candidacy, however, it's unclear just how much he's willing to shower on the creation of a new party. Many of the people cheering Perot on Election Night had invested months of their lives in this campaign, working in the petition drive and on the phone bank. The organization they created is eventually supposed to become self-supporting, but unless it gets Perot's financial backing it is likely to collapse.

Perot's political future is, of course, up to him. With his nearly bottomless fortune, a core of dedicated volunteers, and a surprisingly credible showing in the election (given all his miscues), he could become an even more formidable force in American politics over the next four years, but he is hobbled by his brittle personality and his own ambivalence. As the crowd shouted "Ninety-six! Ninety-six!" Perot cupped his ear. No doubt he loves the adulation, but is this the cry he longs to hear? "I want everybody in the new Administration to start doing such a brilliant job for the American people that we're all out in the streets cheering them by February," Perot told his fans. "Now then, we always got the safety valve, right? You can bring that old stray dog out from the dog pound again."

After the speeches, the crowd drifted out of the ballroom, uncertain whether this night was the end of a onetime burst of whimsy on the part of an eccentric billionaire or the beginning of a new political structure. As one of Perot's blond daughters, Carolyn Rathjen, was signing autographs, she was asked, "Are you glad it's over?"

"Over?" she said. "It seems to me that it's just on pause."

CHEERS

HENRY WHITEHEAD was on his way home to Harlem when he realized that he might not get there in time to see the winner of the Presidential election declared, so he hopped off the uptown bus at Broadway and Seventy-second Street and darted into Donohue's, an old Irish bar just east of Gray's Papaya. Mr. Whitehead, a retired civil servant, whose memories of Presidential campaigns go back to working for Adlai Stevenson in 1956, found in Donohue's exactly what he was looking for: an oversized TV tuned to one of the networks, and no jukebox competing with the broadcast. A dozen or so customers lined the bar, all gazes fixed on the big screen, near the front door. Mr. Whitehead, who was the only black person in the room, ordered a vodka and grapefruit juice and took a seat at the bar. From behind him, as he turned to the TV, a thick voice bawled at Cokie Roberts, "Don't speak for me, you bonehead bitch!"

The owner of the thick voice, a middle-aged guy in a baseball cap and a white satin baseball warm-up jacket, turned out to be the only person doing any talking in Donohue's. He was loudly unhappy about the way the election was going. As Bill Clinton piled up projected electoral-college votes, he wailed, "Oh, God, please don't let it happen! I'll reënlist. Jesse Jackson's gonna be Secretary of State! And Al Sharpton, he'll get something!" A little later, he announced, "If this guy gets in, I'm going to New Zealand on a one-way ticket. I'm not going to be a minority in my own country."

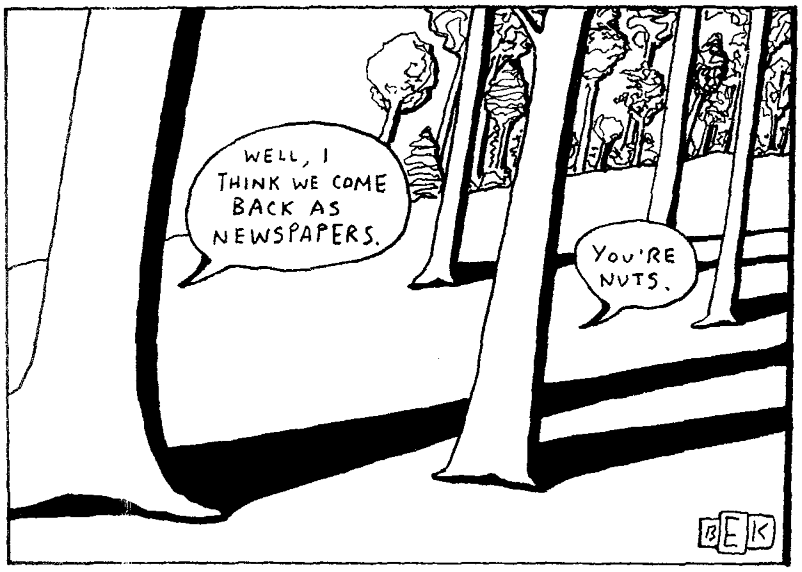
Then two young black men came through the front door. They paused beneath the TV screen and studied the crowd at the bar, which studied them in turn. They glanced nervously up at the TV, and one of them mouthed a question—"Who's winning?"—to a drinker at the near end of the bar, but before they could receive an answer the loudmouth in the baseball jacket had crossed the room toward them and was shooing them roughly backward. "If you ain't gonna drink, you can't hang around here, sorry, adios, 'bye," he said, and although he was clearly not the owner, or even an employee, he succeeded in pushing them out the door. The bartender, a heavyset young Irishman, said nothing. The self-appointed bouncer strode back to his place, cursing the black men with an Italian obscenity and muttering bitterly about "democracy."

More or less simultaneously, George Bush gave his gracious concession speech and the man in the baseball jacket left Donohue's, whereupon the atmosphere lightened. Mr. Whitehead, who was elegantly dressed for the evening in a well-cut black wool overcoat, a black-and-white houndstooth jacket, and a black turtleneck, lit a cigarette and allowed himself a smile. "The first campaign I really *worked* in was John F. Kennedy's, in 1960," he said. "I was at the New York campaign headquarters on Election Night, but, of course, no winner was declared until the next day. J.F.K. had a certain élan, as the French say. The Irish were so proud of him, and rightly so. He was the first outsider, the first non-Wasp, to win the Presidency. He's still the only one to have done it, and, with the decline of the Irish political machines, who knows when we'll see another one? Clubhouse politics was not a gateway to heaven. It was rough, and the alliances formed between the Irish and the blacks, as in the J.F.K. campaign, were always just alliances between politicians, not between communities. But there was a warmth to clubhouse politics, a humanity. It wasn't remote, like this—like today." Mr. Whitehead looked around at the crowd in Donohue's. "Of course, that was before the Irish moved to the suburbs."

Not all the Irish have moved to the suburbs, but so many have that it is no longer very useful to describe an Upper West Side joint like Donohue's as an Irish bar. A few hangers-on from the old neighborhood were on hand for Election Night, but as the evening progressed the crowd grew increasingly mixed, gaining a couple of old Jewish women, who stood below the TV screen and ordered nothing (but were not ejected), and, later, a trio of Army-jacketed Irish—not Irish-American—feminists, who bemoaned in boat-fresh brogues the senate victories of Al D'Amato and Arlen Specter. On the whole, the Donohue's crowd now revealed itself to be pro-Clinton—or, at least, anti-Bush. When Barbara Bush appeared on the screen, a young man snidely remarked, "Now she can get a face-lift."

"Now she can get a divorce," one of the feminists shot back.

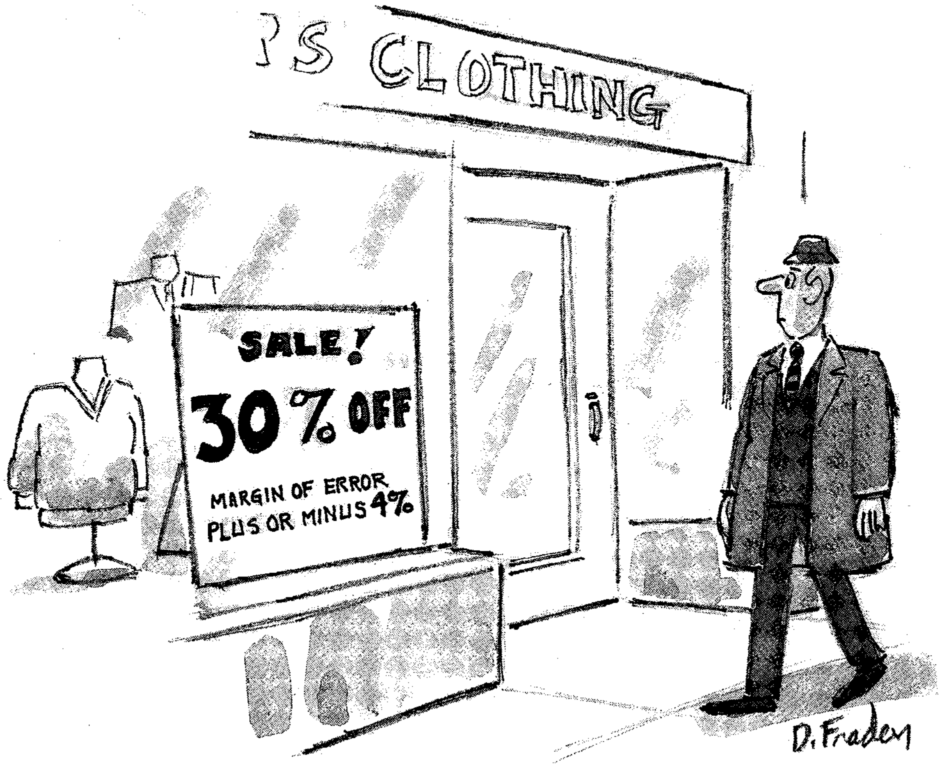
Another young man expressed relief that the bully in the baseball jacket had left.


WELL, I THINK WE COME BACK AS NEWSPAPERS.
YOU'RE NUTS.
BEK

Mr. Whitehead, who was still nursing his first drink, smiled faintly. "If anyone had responded to him—to his, ah, venom—he would still be here," he said. "But no one did."

HOME BOYS

NOW that Bill Clinton has been elected President, he faces a sudden housing problem in his home town. For twelve of the past fourteen years, he has been living comfortably at the taxpayers' expense in the governor's mansion in Little Rock. But in the future, when he is not in Washington at the White House, he will be one of the homeless. This is a matter of deep concern to the citizens of Little Rock; their joy at seeing their man become the most important person in America is being tempered by fear that he may leave them and never come back. So they are doing everything they can to insure that the President of the United States remains a neighbor. It is rumored locally that a mysterious group of Arkansas businessmen is thinking of setting up a foundation to buy a suitable property for use by Mr. Clinton as a Southern White House. These men are said to be considering lakeside locations in Hot Springs, where the President-elect grew up, and estates in the Ozark Mountains as well as houses in Little Rock itself. Alas, even before managing to confirm the existence of such plans, the local media have begun to question their propriety.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ACCORDING to a rumor picked up by the media from the Yale campus in the week before the election, the defeated George Bush could soon be offered the Presidency of that great university. Like all really good rumors, this one contains enough believable elements to ring true. It makes sense that George Bush, the White House's own, would leap at the chance to take dignity-preserving refuge in the Presidency of his alma mater. And, unlike Mrs. Benno Schmidt, the troublingly independent Helen Whitney (who never even pretended to move to New Haven from New York, and spurned entirely the opportunity to preside as first lady of Yale), Barbara Bush would probably be delighted to pour tea on Hillhouse Avenue and provide Yale with a comfy, at-home first family.

More reasons Old Blues might turn to Old Blue Blood for the job:

Unlike Bush's other home states, Connecticut really is the place he comes from: his father, Prescott Bush, was a Connecticut senator, and New Haven is packed with various relatives. (In 1988, it was said that Connecticut provided support for Bush from the grass roots of every country club.)

George Bush likes to shop at J. Press, the preppy New Haven haberdasher, which he refers to affectionately as "J. Squeeze."

There are lots of tennis courts in New Haven. There's the New Haven Lawn Club, for instance.

The usually liberal New Haven *Register* cannily endorsed a Bush reëlection.

He could drop in on Skull and Bones, on High Street, any time.

Crime in New Haven, which is one reason people hesitate to take jobs at Yale, would be a non-issue for people with Secret Service protection—no stolen car radios for the Bushes.

A nice big house comes with the job. The Bushes don't really have anywhere to go home to, other than that famous hotel room in Texas and their vacation house in Kennebunkport.

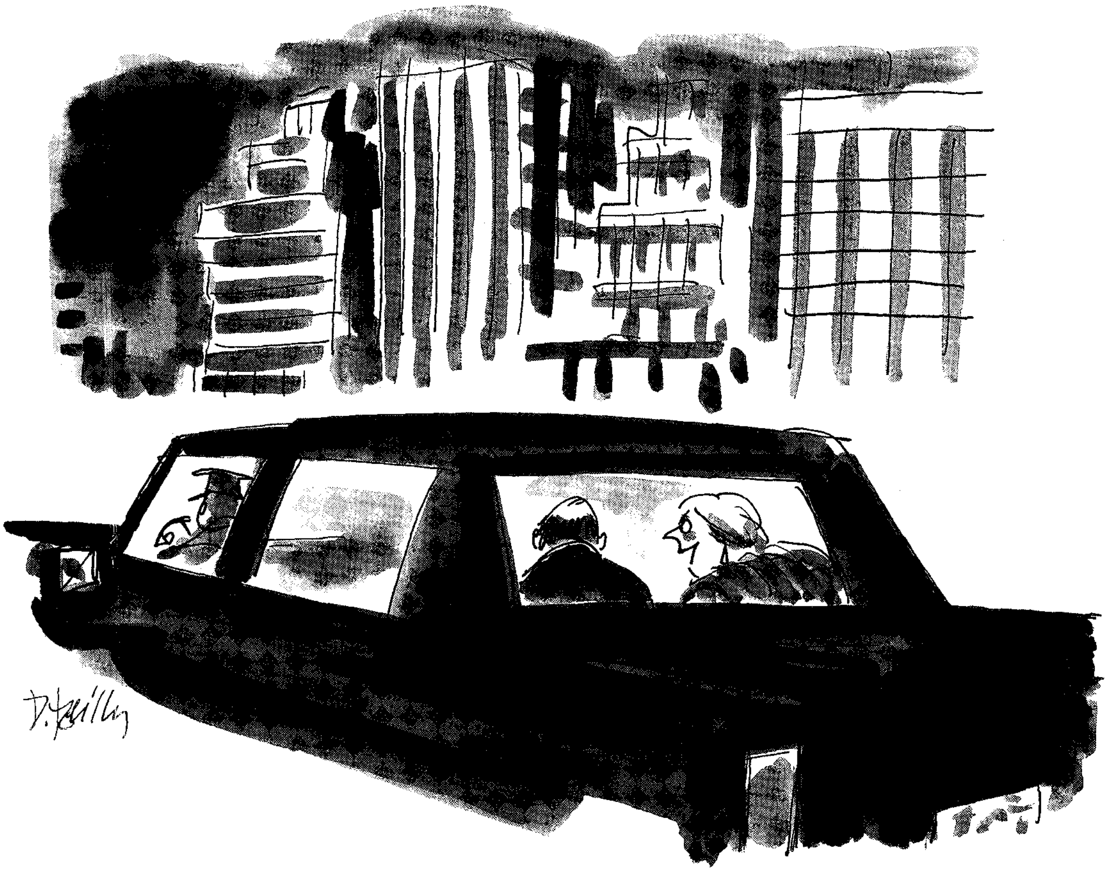
He would still be the president of something. (And Yale takes its presidents seriously: on November 22, 1963, when word went around the campus that the President had been assassinated, many people concluded erroneously that A. Whitney Griswold had been shot.)

Last year, Yale not only bestowed an honorary degree on Mr. Bush but let him speak—an extremely unusual break with tradition. (That commencement surprise was the previous Yale-Bush rumor, and *it* was true.)

Though the appointment would strike some as a feather in Harvard's cap, the only question left, it seems, is this: If the Education President becomes the Yale president, when's he gonna stop *droppin'* those "g"s?

DRAWING-ROOM DIPLOMACY

HOW were conservatives feeling as the results came in? One might have expected them to be despondent and bitter, perhaps blaming George Bush for the disaster that was befalling the Republican Party. But no such feelings were in evidence at the New York home of William F. Buckley, Jr., the noted conservative writer, broadcaster, and millionaire. On the contrary, the atmosphere of his Election Night gathering could hardly have been more relaxed. The prospect of Clinton's taking over the White House was being greeted with a benign, easygoing detachment, and no outward show of horror. Perhaps, having already discounted a Clinton victory, people had ceased to care. Perhaps they were already looking forward to the pleasures of attacking and undermining a new Democratic Administration. Whatever the reason, it seemed as if Mr. Bush's imposition of a two-hundred-per-cent tax on European wine—had the decision been known at the time—would have caused far more distress than the prospect of a Democratic President.



"Very well, Roger, while we're being so refreshingly frank—I voted for the bozos. Ha-ha."

• •

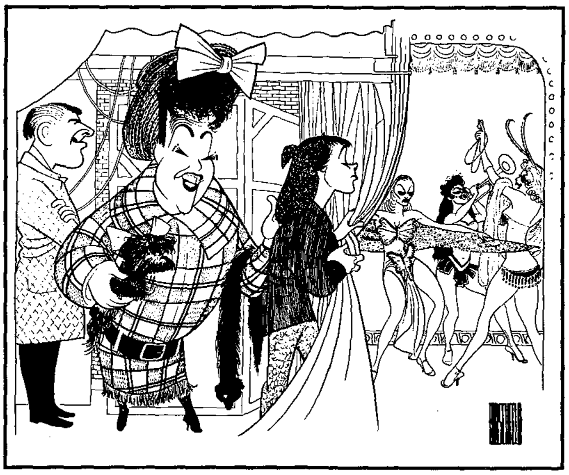
In the unashamedly opulent context of his Upper East Side drawing room, while waiters conscientiously replenished the glasses of his guests, Mr. Buckley sat in his shirtsleeves in front of the television, cheerfully switching from channel to channel with the remote control. As he did so, one woman turned to another and said, "That's a very male thing, you know. Only men do it." Here at last was something controversial and interesting to discuss.

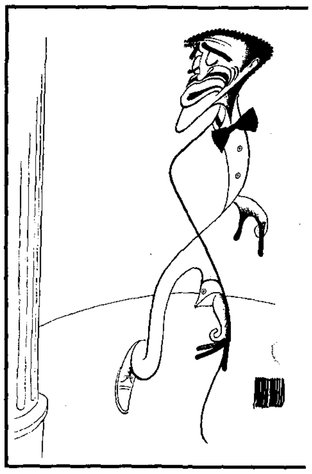
Meanwhile, in a panelled study overlooking Fifth Avenue, Mortimer B. Zuckerman, the owner-elect of the *News*, welcomed his guests as a pair of oversized televisions flickered between CNN, ABC, and C-SPAN. Dianes of the big and small screens (Keaton, Sawyer), and stars of the printed page (Anna Wintour, A. M. Rosenthal, Leslie Gelb) lolled on couches, speculating about the composition of the President-elect's Cabinet and staff. Morley Safer leaned on the piano, looking startlingly like W. H. Auden. Mr. Zuckerman confided with quiet pride that a signed anti-Bush screed in his *U.S. News & World Report* had elicited the tribute of more than a hundred subscription cancellations. By midnight or so, the crowd had thinned out. Mr. Clinton appeared on the screen to acknowledge his victory, and called, as winners of elections often do, for "a new beginning." The investment banker Pete Peterson, once Richard Nixon's Secretary of Commerce, sighed. "Please," he said. "Not *another* new beginning. I'm not sure I can take it."

TEAM SPIRIT

It is unlikely that Little Rock will ever see a party like it again. Tens of thousands of Arkansans, a horde of journalists, and a sprinkling of national celebrities ignored a tornado warning and poured into the streets in the confident expectation of a Democratic victory. Fortunately, the victory happened and the tornado didn't, so all was well. Despite a steady drizzle, spirits remained high among the crowd waiting outside the Old Statehouse for Clinton to speak. The "gonzo" journalist Hunter Thompson called at the Clinton campaign headquarters in the former Arkansas *Gazette* building and said afterward that he had nearly been arrested while attempting to make off with a six-foot cardboard cutout of the next President.

It was touching to find the Clinton team showing the same indomitable energy in celebrating that it showed in campaigning. The New York City labor leader Dennis Rivera, who had stumped for Clinton among Spanish-speaking voters across the Southwest, couldn't help yelping as New Mexico went Democratic for the first election in three decades. But his yelps couldn't compare with the ear-splitting screams that emerged from a room in the Camelot Hotel when the Ohio result finally guaranteed Clinton his win. Inside were twenty of his top advisers, including James Carville, George Stephanopoulos, Stan Greenberg, and Mandy Grunwald, who, in the manner of a victorious football team, piled on top of one another to form a writhing, ululating heap. Thus began the new Democratic dawn. ♦





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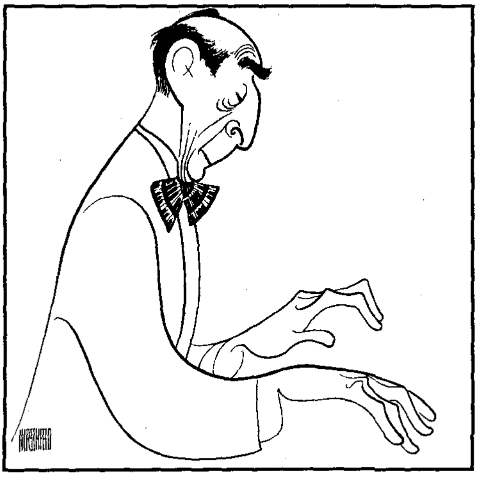

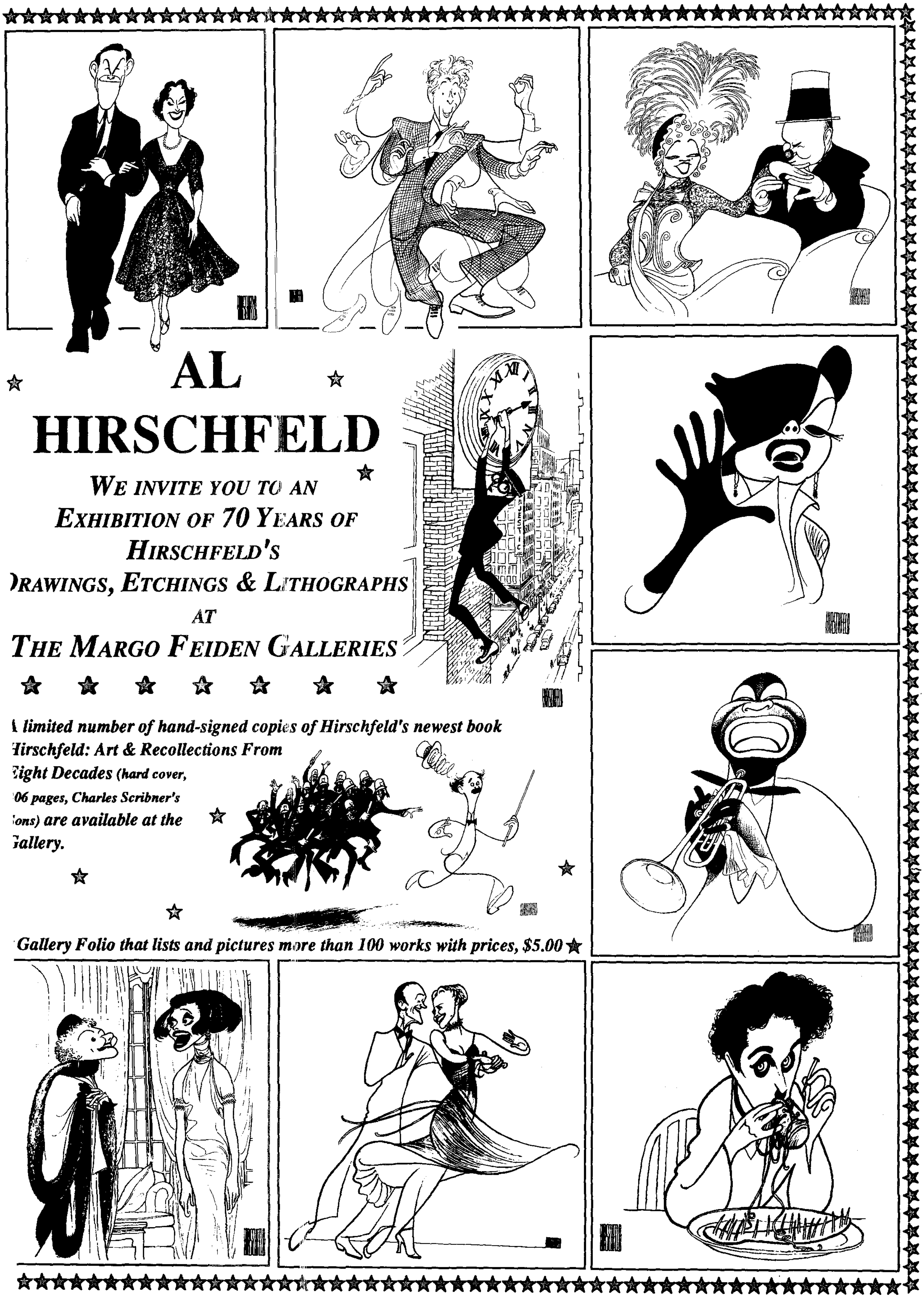

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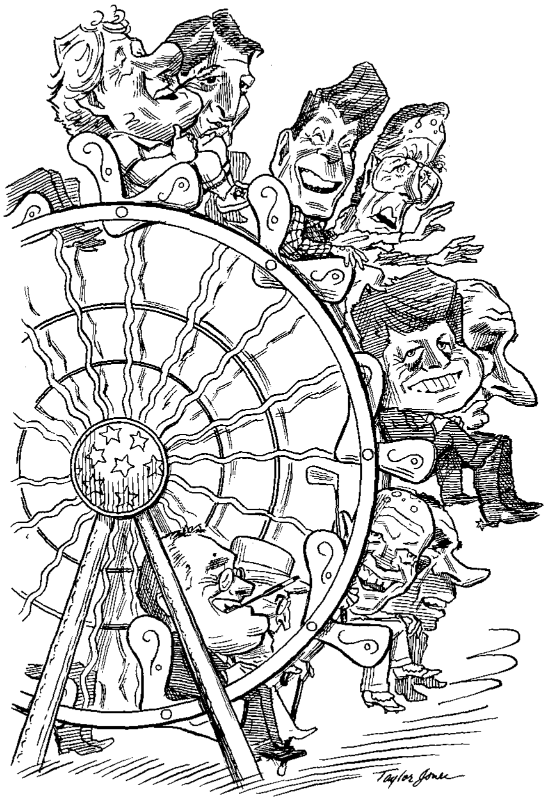
THE TURN OF THE CYCLE

by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

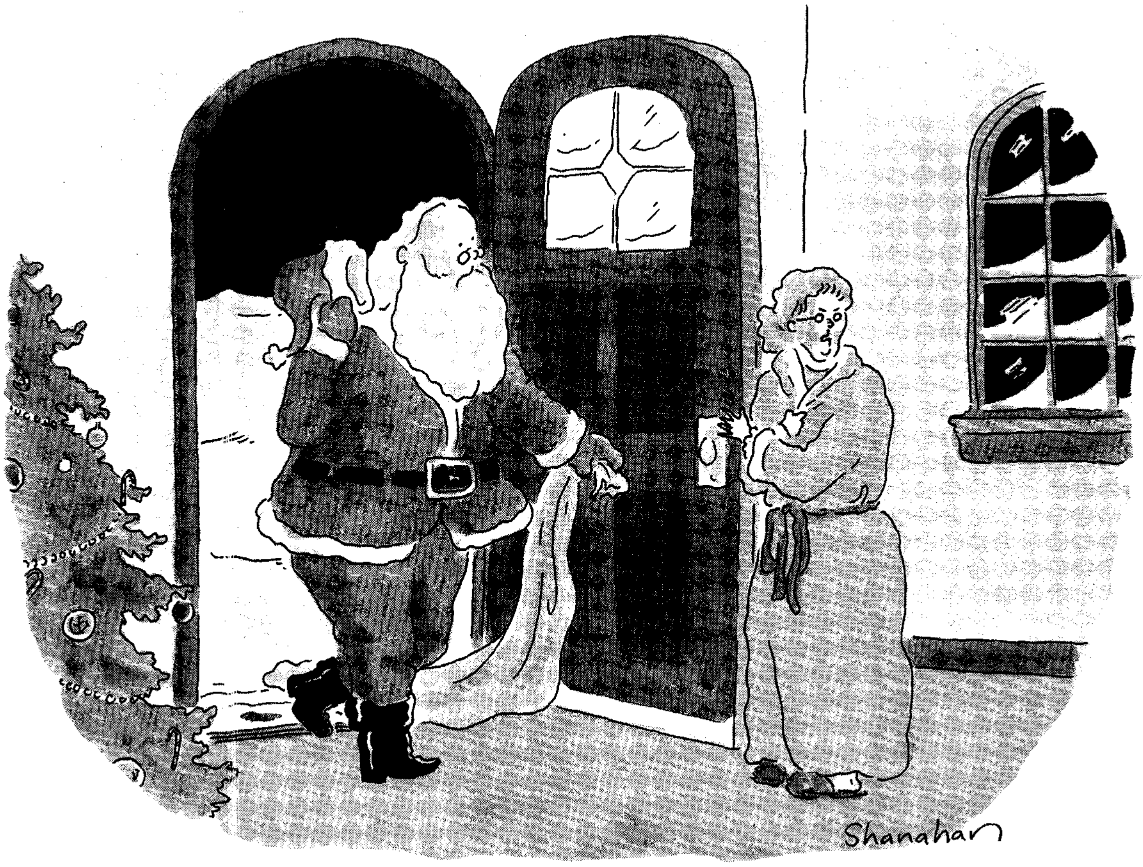
IN the nineteen-eighties, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher transformed the political climate of the West. They came to power bearing dogmatic truths, pointed their governments in new directions, and greatly influenced the policies of other nations. After a while, their ideological certitudes tried the patience of their own peoples; and when they left office their epigones, George Bush and John Major, sought to perpetuate their legacies by introducing minor modifications and speaking in kinder and gentler voices. Now, with Bush's defeat and Major's decline, the epoch dominated by Reaganism and Thatcherism is at an end. What, in retrospect, was it all about?



TAYLOR JONES

Reagan and Thatcher were arresting personalities: a man of genial and imperturbable assurance, a woman of steely self-confidence, both dedicated to a rigid set of abstract ideas about government, society, and people, both wonderfully effective in bringing the gospel to their electorates. Both were carried into power by popular discontents that had grown with the years and finally centered on the expanding role of government as the root of political and social evil. In America, John Kennedy's New Frontier and Lyndon Johnson's Great Society had left in their wake a mass of government social programs and of health, safety, consumer-protection, and equal-opportunity regulations. Along with their undeniable benefits, the programs and regulations produced exasperation—and not only among the affluent but also among the striving middle classes, where the belief began to take hold that welfare payments bred a class of loafers, frauds, and illegitimate babies, that affirmative-action and civil-rights enforcement violated equality of treatment, and that regulation, spending, taxes, and deficits were destroying entrepreneurial initiative and corrupting personal responsibility. The aging of the population meanwhile caused a relentless rise in "entitlements"—especially Social Security and Medicare. By 1980, entitlements consumed nearly half the federal budget. The highest marginal tax rate, though it fell from ninety-one per cent at the end of the Eisenhower Administration to seventy-seven per cent in 1964 and twenty-eight per cent in 1988, seemed increasingly burdensome to the growing numbers who, as a result of inflation, found themselves paying it. When the Vietnam War and the oil shocks took inflation to chronic and frightening levels, many blamed government spending and deficits. In 1980, at the end of the Presidency of Jimmy Carter, inflation reached twelve and a half per cent. The market's remedy—interest rates of twenty-one and a half per cent—deepened popular anger.

In Great Britain, the convergence of



"You smell like a chimney."

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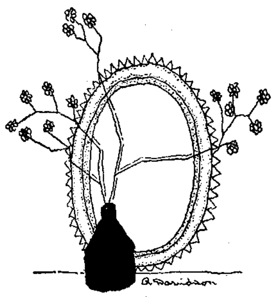
Labour and Tory reform, of the liberal socialist Hugh Gaitskell and the "wet" Tory R. A. Butler, had produced "Butskellism" and a similar drive toward the paternalistic state. The conviction grew, especially among the wealthier in both countries, that government was arbitrary, meddlesome, and unresponsive, doing too much and doing it badly; that government paternalism undermined self-reliance; that government intervention made problems worse rather than better; and that the apparently inexorable expansion of government had to be stopped in its tracks.

The accumulating resentments had intimidated political leaders before Thatcher and Reagan came into office. In Great Britain, the Labour Governments of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan anticipated Thatcher in fiscal retrenchment, in monetarist experiment, even in attempts to reduce the power of trade unions. In America, President Carter anticipated Reagan when he declared that a major goal was "to free the American people from the burden of overregulation." Deregulation—of the airlines, railroads, trucking, banking, and oil industries—became a cause that for a season enlisted even liberal Democrats like Senator Edward Kennedy.



In 1963, when critics attacked the federal government as "an outsider, an intruder, an adversary," President Kennedy had replied that government "is not a stranger or not an enemy. It is the people of fifty states joining in a national effort." Fifteen years later, abandoning the Roosevelt-Truman-Kennedy tradition, Carter told the nation, in Reaganesque style, "Government cannot solve our problems. It can't set our goals. It cannot define our vision. Government cannot eliminate poverty, or provide a bountiful economy, or reduce inflation, or save our cities, or cure illiteracy, or provide energy." To be sure, Carter added that "a true partnership between government and the people" could do these worthy things; he had not quite abandoned the idea of public responsibility. Even so, historians will very likely see more continuity than discontinuity in the 1980 shift to Reagan. Continuity may come to seem the case in Britain as well. At the time, in both countries, partisan acrimonies concealed the extent to which leaders agreed. Carter's and Callaghan's reactions, however, were ad-hoc accommodations to a changing political mood, not the expression of a full-blown social philosophy.

The President of the United States, Henry Adams once wrote, "resembles the commander of a ship at sea. He must have a helm to grasp, a course to steer, a port to seek." No one knew where Carter wanted to steer the ship. He lacked what another lacker, George Bush, later called "the vision thing." It was thus left to Thatcher and Reagan to proclaim the break with the past and to declare a new political epoch. Both had "the vision thing" in abundance. Reagan had little else. He had no capacity for analysis and no command of detail, but it could not be doubted that he had a course to steer and a port to seek.

Where dislike of affirmative government was an occasional thought for Carter, it was for Reagan the foundation of all policy.

The new President brought to office a litany of general economic precepts drawn from the prophets of social Darwinism and laissez-faire—from Adam Smith and Herbert Spencer and Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich von Hayek. His White House was filled with ardent young people wearing Adam Smith neckties. "Government is not the solution to our problem," he announced in his first Inaugural Address. "Government is the problem." Get government off our backs, as the phrase of the day went: reduce taxes, liberate the entrepreneurs, and our problems will solve themselves, or rather they will be solved by the magic of the marketplace. The disaster of planned economies in the Communist world and the troubles of maturing mixed economies in Western Europe soon lent the Reagan-Thatcher example new prestige.

What gave Reagan's Presidency its emotional power, however, was hardly his exaltation of the market. He saw a return to laissez-faire as the necessary condition not only for economic revitalization but also for moral and spiritual

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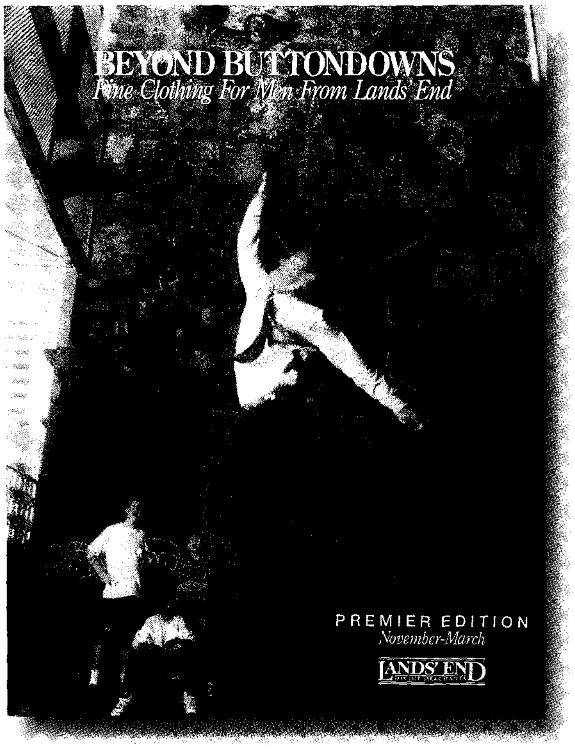

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renewal. Many today see the Reagan crusade as a cynical effort to load the dice even further for the already overloaded rich. But that is the view from without. To understand why Reaganism's appeal was so broad, one must see it through its own eyes.

What Reagan cherished, the port he sought, was an America inspired by traditional ideals of self-reliance, hard work, plain talk, thrift, sacrifice, the happy family, the free market, love of country, worship of God. He promised to reverse the growth of government, to end the culture of dependence, to reinvigorate individual responsibility, to balance the budget, to reward entrepreneurship, to make America "stand tall" again at home and across the world. His goal was America as a small-town memory—white houses, green lawns, picket fences, the soda fountain and the country store, the pledge of allegiance and the Sunday school. It was a vision derived from *Saturday Evening Post* covers, from *Reader's Digest* aphorisms, from the sagacious admonitions of Hollywood's Judge Hardy, father of Andy, and, no doubt, from his own wishful memories of the small Illinois towns where he grew up and where his own father, an alcoholic, always skirted the edge of poverty. Reagan's vision was sentimental but powerful. When he invested it with the histrionic skills of a veteran second-class actor cast toward the end of his career in a first-class part, it appealed mightily to plain Americans subjected to high inflation and high interest rates, subjected to self-righteous castigations by feminists and racial spokesmen and long-haired students, subjected most recently to international humiliation at the hands of Muslim fanatics holding American hostages in Iran.

"It's kohlrabi, the next hot vegetable."

For a time, the vision prospered. Reagan's serene confidence in his objectives, his reassuring and uplifting oratory, his infectious optimism, his amiable charm, brought him both a devoted mass following and control of the national agenda. As President, Reagan often appeared to be out of his own loop. Still, in foreign affairs he radiated national pride and a sense of command. He denounced "the evil empire," set in motion the largest peacetime military buildup in American history, and lavished money and intrigue on eradicating what he saw as dangerous Communist expansionism in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada. All this for a time gave beleaguered Americans renewed faith in what D. W. Brogan used to call "the illusion of American omnipotence." It is probably true that Reagan's intensification of the arms race also hastened the collapse of the Soviet economy. In a reversal that did him enormous credit, he joined Margaret Thatcher and outdistanced his own national-security bureaucracy in taking Mikhail Gorbachev seriously and in moving to end the Cold War.

After Reagan's 1984 reëlection, his popularity was so impressive that commentators predicted a political realignment as massive and enduring as that produced half a century before by Franklin Roosevelt. Reagan, it seemed, had moved outward from the old Republican base of businessmen, suburbanites, and farmers to win over groups once reliably Democratic: the young seeking a golden path to wealth; evangelicals in revolt against the permissive society; blue-collar workers disturbed by crime, racial favoritism, and disrespect for the flag. This new Reagan coalition, it was said, would replace the old New Deal coalition and dominate American politics for the half century to come.

Democrats despaired. Horace Busby argued that the Republican conquest of the South and West had placed a conservative "lock" on the Presidency. E. J. Dionne argued that the false choices presented by politicians, liberal as well as conservative, had made Americans hate politics. Thomas and Mary Edsall saw unscrupulous Republican exploitation of racial issues as the means by which the Democrats would be permanently denied the White House. John Kenneth Galbraith observed bleakly that further liberal reform would require the discontented to be a voting majority, but that the success of past liberal reform had by now produced a "culture of contentment," adamantly opposed to change. Conservatives hailed the new Reagan coalition as the guarantee of conservative Presidencies for the indefinite future.

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vulsion against the values and methods of the Reagan years had begun to gather momentum. By 1991, according to public-opinion polls, two-thirds of the American people thought that the republic was on the wrong track. Reagan was now a less popular ex-President than Carter. There was an especially striking change in the mood of the young. Half a dozen years before, the sincerest ambition of many young people, reflecting the promise of Reaganism, had been to get rich. By 1992, that promise was in tatters, and the young were open, if not yet to idealism, at least to the idea that public as well as personal and private efforts might be required if their generation was to have the hope of a better life.

WHAT happened to the dream? Most fundamentally, Reagan's vision was inherently unattainable. The port he sought had vanished sometime before the First World War, if it was ever real then. The great, sprawling, polyglot, urbanized, industrialized, crime-ridden, drug-ridden contemporary America could not be reconstructed along the lines of Judge Hardy's village of Carvel.

And the course Reagan steered to seek his unattainable destination proved full of catastrophe. The tax cut of 1981, joined with the increased defense budget and high interest rates, led to a succession of runaway budget deficits and, within a decade, tripled the national debt. The theory of Reagan's supply-side economists that tax cuts for the rich would pay for themselves by generating economic growth and larger revenues turned out to be an illusion. Or perhaps, as Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and others contended, the deficits were deliberately contrived to cripple the public sector. The gap between rich and poor grew wider than it had been for forty years.

Meanwhile, American business lived beyond its means, by drawing on foreign investment—a spree that transformed the United States in the eight Reagan years from the world's largest creditor to the world's largest debtor. Democratic "tax and spend" gave way to Reaganite "borrow and spend." The influx of foreign money fuelled an orgy of speculation, and deregulation promoted the casino economy, with its piratical takeovers, leveraged buy-outs, smash-and-grab finance, vulgar consumption, towering debt, and contagious criminality. The savings-and-loan scandals, the Pentagon procurement scandals, the Housing and Urban Development scandals, the Environmental Protection Agency scandals, the insider-trading scandals on Wall Street, the parade of public and corporate officials on the way to prison—all were consequences of a national leadership that assigned the pursuit of self-interest moral priority and systematically sabotaged the laws and agencies designed to protect the public interest. Reagan, *Time* observed in 1987, had "forfeited, indeed squandered, his role as the nation's moral father."

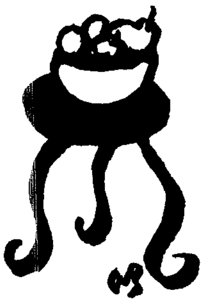
Apart from his real contribution to winding down the Cold War, Reagan's conduct of foreign affairs largely decayed into subterfuge and scandal. Obsessed by fear of Communism in Central America, he privatized much of United States foreign policy, turning it over to a clique of adventurers operating behind the scenes and in violation of the Constitution. The result was the Iran-Contra affair, William Casey's freewheeling Central Intelligence Agency, the Administration's systematic deception of Congress, and a bedlam of idiotic initiatives, delusions, and lies, most of which Reagan later claimed he could not remember.

Books from White House aides and other close associates soon portrayed a passive President, incurious about the world, dependent on surreptitious glances at cue cards, and dominated by a forceful wife who herself consulted astrologers at times of major decision. Reagan's Presidency, despite his latter-day emergence as a peacemaker, staggered to a generally inglorious end. When he left office, a predominant national reaction was relief.

He left a messy legacy, part of which was a denial of the means of extrication. Having designated government as the enemy and having produced a deficit so large as to block further social spending, Reagan had also persuaded voters of the wickedness of reducing the deficit by raising taxes. Yet the United States had become both the most lightly taxed advanced capitalist democracy in the world and the least progressive in its tax structure. By making the advocacy of tax increases a formula for political suicide, Reagan may have succeeded in depriving his successors of some of the tools needed to do their job.

And the Reagan coalition, that incongruous combination of the country club and the revival meeting, never really crystallized. The crusading zeal behind Reaganism came from small-town conservatives and from fundamentalist moral absolutists. The two main wings of the coalition agreed on little besides Reagan himself. The economic conservatives wanted to reduce economic regulation and taxes. The evangelical moralists wanted to defeat "secular humanism," feminism, abortion, pornography, and homosexuality. Their idea, it seems, was to get government off the people's backs and into their beds. Once Reagan left the White House, his coalition began to break into antagonistic parts. In 1992, crucial components—young voters, independents, Catholics, libertarian suburbanites, blue-collar Reagan Democrats—defected to the Democrats and to the frankly pro-tax candidacy of Ross Perot.

Reagan's faith in the capacity of the private market to cure all national troubles lost any credibility. Taking government off people's backs released more speculators and con men than it did entrepreneurs and inventors. By Bush's time, Reaganite policies were producing the lowest rate of economic growth since the Great Depression. Few continued to pretend that the nation's economic and social problems, rendered acute by a dozen years of neglect, were amenable to private solutions. Private enterprise would not repair the nation's crumbling infrastructure—bridges, dams, tunnels, harbors, roads, waterways. Private enterprise would not save the public schools, protect the environment, or produce universal health care. Private enterprise alone would not salvage the homeless or increase racial harmony or rescue the cities or stop the spread of drugs, crime, and violence. The very nature of such problems left no alternative but increased resort to public action. The plunge into an unrecoverable past had manifestly failed. The politics of nostalgia had its last—or, at least, its latest—hurrah. By 1990, the political tide had begun to turn. An epoch was approaching its end.



The account is not complete, however, if it fails to note the rather precise way the rise and fall of Reaganism fits into the historic rhythms of American politics. As the inheritor of a cyclical hypothesis advanced more than half a century ago by my father, the Harvard historian, I must declare an interest. To justify bringing the hypothesis up now, I can say that in the days when the Democrats were said to be doomed by the Republican lock on the Presidency, by the manipulation of race, by the hatred of politics, by the culture of contentment, I kept invoking the family thesis that the tide would turn in the nineteen-nineties.

The thesis is that American politics alternate at roughly thirty-year intervals between conservative and liberal periods. My father set forth the argument in a *Yale Review* essay in 1939 and, ten years later, in his book "Paths to the Present." There he predicted as follows: "The recession from liberalism which began in 1947 [following the election of the Republican-controlled Eightieth Congress] was due to end in 1962, with a possible margin of a year or two in either direction. On this basis the next conservative epoch will commence around 1978." Kennedy and Reagan were thus foreseen over forty years ago, and, on the same basis, the next liberal epoch was due to come, with a possible margin of a year or two, in 1993. Predictive success is a reasonable test of the validity of a hypothesis.

The pattern of alternation can be seen as between times when private action, private enterprise, and private interest are deemed the best way to meet problems and times when the republic turns to public action and the public interest. From this perspective, the Reaganite nineteen-eighties represented an era dedicated to unquestioning faith in the solvent power of private action and the deregulated market. The nineteen-eighties were in effect a reënactment of the Eisenhower nineteen-fifties, as the Eisenhower nineteen-fifties were a reënactment of the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover nineteen-twenties, and as the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover nineteen-twenties were a reënactment of the McKinley eighteen-

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nineties. And as each private-action phase eventually ran out of ideas and into trouble the people turned, at similar thirty-year intervals, to public action and affirmative government. Thus Theodore Roosevelt ushered in the Progressive era in 1901, F.D.R. the New Deal in 1933, Kennedy the New Frontier in 1961.

President Clinton will have one salient advantage: the turning of the cycle will coincide with his own personal convictions. This has not always been the case. Truman's victory in 1948 was a kind of historical fluke, made possible by his own doughty campaigning and by the complacency of Thomas E. Dewey. But Truman was running against the tide of history, and his Fair Deal trickled away in frustration in his second term. Had Dewey won in 1948, as Walter Lippmann used later to argue, sensible conservatism would have taken over, McCarthyism would never have got very far, and the republic would have been spared much bitterness and disorder.

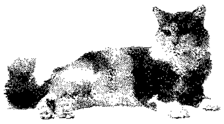
Nixon's victory in 1968 was another historical fluke. The traumas of the nineteen-sixties—the assassination in Dallas, the war in Vietnam, the civil-rights struggles, two more terrible assassinations, riots, drugs, violence—derailed the reform impulse. Yet the liberal tide was still running strong enough to shape Nixon's early years in office and produce the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act. Then, when the cyclical swing to conservatism began in the later nineteen-seventies, the reaction against Watergate elected Carter on an essentially nonpolitical program of personal moral rectitude. The result was another season of disharmony between President and Zeitgeist—and another period of frustration. In 1993, President and Zeitgeist should meet in warm embrace.

There is no mystery about the thirty-year periodicity—roughly, fifteen years in one direction, fifteen years in the other. Thirty years is roughly the span of a generation. People tend to be formed politically by the ideals dominant when they first become politically conscious. Young people who grew up when T.R. and Woodrow Wilson were inspiring the nation—F.D.R., Eleanor Roosevelt, Harry Truman—carried those progressive ideals thirty years later into the New Deal and the Fair Deal. Young people who grew up under F.D.R.—John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, Robert Kennedy—brought the New Deal up to date thirty years later in the New Frontier and the Great Society. John Kennedy touched and formed a political generation in the nineteen-sixties. If the rhythm held, the Kennedy generation's time would come in the nineteen-nineties. As the Kennedys and Johnson were children of F.D.R., so Bill Clinton and Albert Gore, Jr., are Kennedy's children.

If this hypothesis has mechanistic overtones, let me emphasize that these are cycles of opportunity, not cycles of necessity. The cycles do not dictate the future. As the national mood swings back and forth, new leaders arise and confront new possibilities. But what the leaders do with these possibilities depends on their own ideas, capacities, skills, visions. A passive Coolidge used a conservative era for one purpose, an accommodating Eisenhower for another, an ideological Reagan for something still different. The next generation of political leaders, in the White House and in Congress, will have no more than the opportunity to move the republic in new directions.

Let conservatives take heart: this too will pass. No doubt the nation will continue in a spirit of public purpose for fifteen years or so. But then, toward the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, people will tire of government activism and reforming uplift, and the young people with Adam Smith ties who came of political age in the nineteen-eighties will have their turn at running the country.

And so the dialectic of democracy carries the republic into the future, each phase correcting the excesses of the phase before, each phase essential to the equilibrium of the system. For, as Emerson said, "It may be safely affirmed of these two metaphysical antagonists, that each is a good half, but an impossible whole. Each exposes the abuses of the other, but in a true society, in a true man, both must combine." ♦



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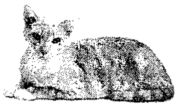

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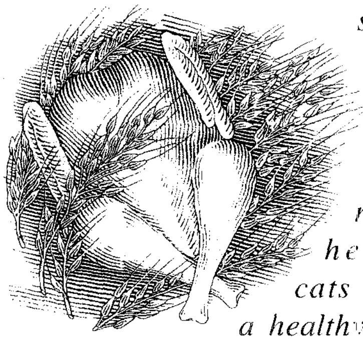

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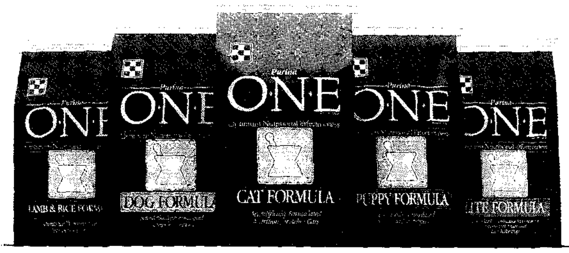

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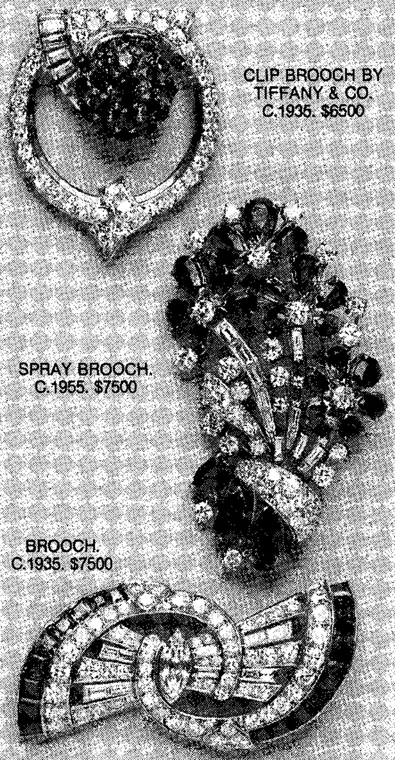

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REPORT FROM KUWAIT

A WOMAN'S PLACE

by Raymond Bonner

In a small, noisy room at the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait City one day last month, a Kuwaiti man wearing a long white robe and a white headdress pleaded with a Philippine woman named Jenny Casanova. Her left eye was black and blue and yellow, and she also had a large bruise on her upper right arm and bruises on her left calf and thigh. The woman, who was thirty years old, had been a maid in the man's house until five days before, when she was beaten by the man's wife. After the beating, she had escaped to the Embassy. The man now wanted her to go to the employment agency that had brought her to Kuwait, so that he could get back the money he had paid for her; she wanted him to return her passport—she couldn't leave the country without it—and to give her a release, so that she could either go back to the Philippines or find employment locally on her own. As he stormed out, having failed to persuade her, I asked him what had happened, and he said, "She hit my wife." And then his wife hit her, he added. He crossed the street, got into a gold-colored Cadillac, and drove off.

The Philippine Embassy in Kuwait has become a home for battered women and runaways, and also an unofficial employment office. Jenny Casanova is among thousands of young Asian women who have come to Kuwait to find work and escape poverty at home—young women who are exploited by just about everyone and protected by almost no one. The Kuwaiti government says that there are now seventy-one thousand domestic servants from Asia in the country—thirty thousand from India, twenty-five thousand from the Philippines, eleven thousand from Bangladesh, and five thousand from Sri Lanka. Some are men, who work as drivers, cooks, or houseboys, but the large majority are women, most of whom work as maids. Almost none of them speak Arabic, and the language barrier frequently results in problems between employer and employee. Many of the maids have been recruited by unscrupulous agencies, which take their money without telling them what lies ahead, or even, in some cases, where they are going. In Kuwait and throughout the Persian Gulf states, these women are taken advantage of by their employers: they are forced to work long hours for low pay, and are often virtually imprisoned. They find that they have almost no place to go for protection. The Kuwaiti government offers them next to nothing, and their own embassies in Kuwait help them only grudgingly.

Jenny Casanova's story is typical. She has three daughters, all under the age of ten. She had no job in Manila, so she sought work in Kuwait, she says, "for the future of my children," who are still in the Philippines. She had to pay an agency in Manila twelve thousand pesos—about five hundred dollars—to find her a job, and when she got to Kuwait, in November of 1991, her employer withheld her first two months' wages to recover part of what he had paid a Kuwaiti recruiting agency. Her salary was forty-five dinars a month—a hundred and sixty-five dollars. The minimum wage in Kuwait is a hundred and seventy dinars a month, but domestic servants are not covered by the country's labor law, and maids are routinely paid only thirty to forty-five dinars.

Casanova got up at five-thirty every morning, was allowed to sit down during the day only for meals, and worked until almost midnight. She had to do all the cooking and cleaning and take care of four children, aged fifteen, fourteen, twelve, and six. She had no day off. When I spoke with Casanova at the Embassy, she told me that she had once said to her employer's wife, " 'Ma'am, I want to go to church.' She said that Filipinos don't go outside."

Casanova told me that she had been beaten several times by the woman she worked for. When I asked why she hadn't fled earlier, she said that she had never been allowed to leave the house, and added, "I was afraid." Then, on the morning of October 4th, the woman yelled at her for not keeping the children's shoes in the right place. Casanova tried to explain to her that the children were always moving them. The woman began beating her, with her hands, with a stick, and with a vacuum-cleaner hose. "I could not move, but she forced me to work," Casanova recalled. Later that day, the woman, thinking that Casanova would flee if she was left alone, took her along on a visit to a relative. A maid at the relative's house saw what had happened, and told Casanova to run away. "Go to the gate slowly, then run," the other maid said, and she gave Casanova a dinar. Casanova left the house and took a taxi to the Embassy. There she found more than two hundred other Philippine maids who had recently fled their employers. They were—and are—encamped in an annex, their suitcases piled on a patio, their clothes spread on a wall to dry in the sun.

Kuwaitis and expatriates go to the Philippine Embassy in search of cheap labor. Most of the negotiations take place in a seedy room containing two dilapidated desks and several white plastic chairs. One day when I was there, an American woman who had lived in Kuwait for twenty-two years stood against a wall, interviewing young women. In a corner, a man and his wife were talking to a young Filipino woman wearing a T-shirt with the logo "Best Beach Club—California." In her previous job, Shirley (as she asked to be called) had been paid fifty dinars a month, for which she had worked from six in the morning until nine at night. She had had one day off during the week. She had liked the job. "She was good, she gave me a lot of time to rest," Shirley said of her former employer. That Shirley was grateful for a job that required her to work fifteen hours a day, six days a week, for fifty cents an hour says a great deal about what it is like to be a maid in Kuwait—and also, no doubt, about conditions in the Philippines. Shirley had been dismissed because she had too many boyfriends. (Most Kuwaiti employers object to a maid's having a boyfriend, because they fear that the maid's values may be passed on to their children.) Shirley went to another family, but they paid her only forty dinars, and she had to work from five-thirty in the morning until after mid-

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night. She fled after two weeks. She did not have a release from her former employer, and the couple interviewing her said they would call and try to arrange one. Unless a runaway maid has a release, it is virtually impossible for a new employer to get her a visa that allows her to remain in Kuwait.

Across the room, two Kuwaiti women in long black scarves and black cloaks had backed a small Philippine woman against the wall. She had been employed by one of the women for fourteen months, and now the woman and her friend were demanding that she give them four hundred dinars—the fee that had been paid to a recruiting agency. A man in white robes and a white headdress approached the Kuwaiti women and spoke to them in Arabic, and, as they turned to go, one of them pointed at the former maid and said, "I want it right now!"

Shortly after they left, a couple named Richard and Mona Brook entered the annex, escorted by a diplomat from the Philippine Embassy. Brook, an accountant, is British; his wife, who teaches at a Montessori school in Kuwait City, is Egyptian. They sat in white plastic chairs by one of the desks, and soon a young Philippine maid who identified herself only as Becky appeared, with four others behind her. The four stood quietly in front of the desk while Becky negotiated. The Brooks, who have two young boys, asked if any of the four women had had experience with children, and all of them said that they had. After fifteen minutes of such interviewing, the Brooks decided they would like to hire a twenty-three-year-old named Josephine, who agreed to take the job for forty dinars a month. She had arrived in Kuwait on December 3, 1991, and on October 5th had fled the family she worked for. She told Mrs. Brook that her employer's twenty-nine-year-old son had hit her and threatened to kill her.

Mrs. Brook left the annex and went *into the* Embassy to call Josephine's former employer and find out whether he would release her. She returned disappointed. She had offered to pay him three hundred dinars for Josephine's release, but he had said that it had cost him five hundred dinars to bring her to Kuwait, and that he wouldn't release her even for that amount. Mrs. Brook

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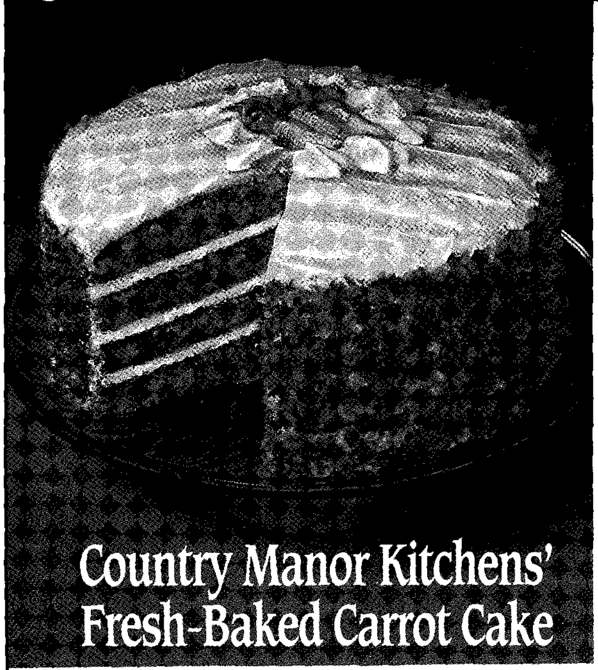

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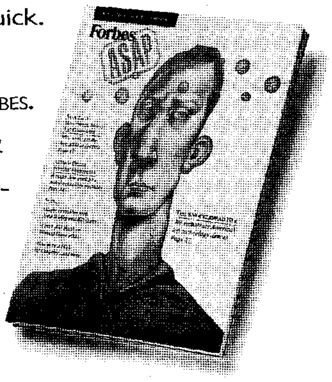

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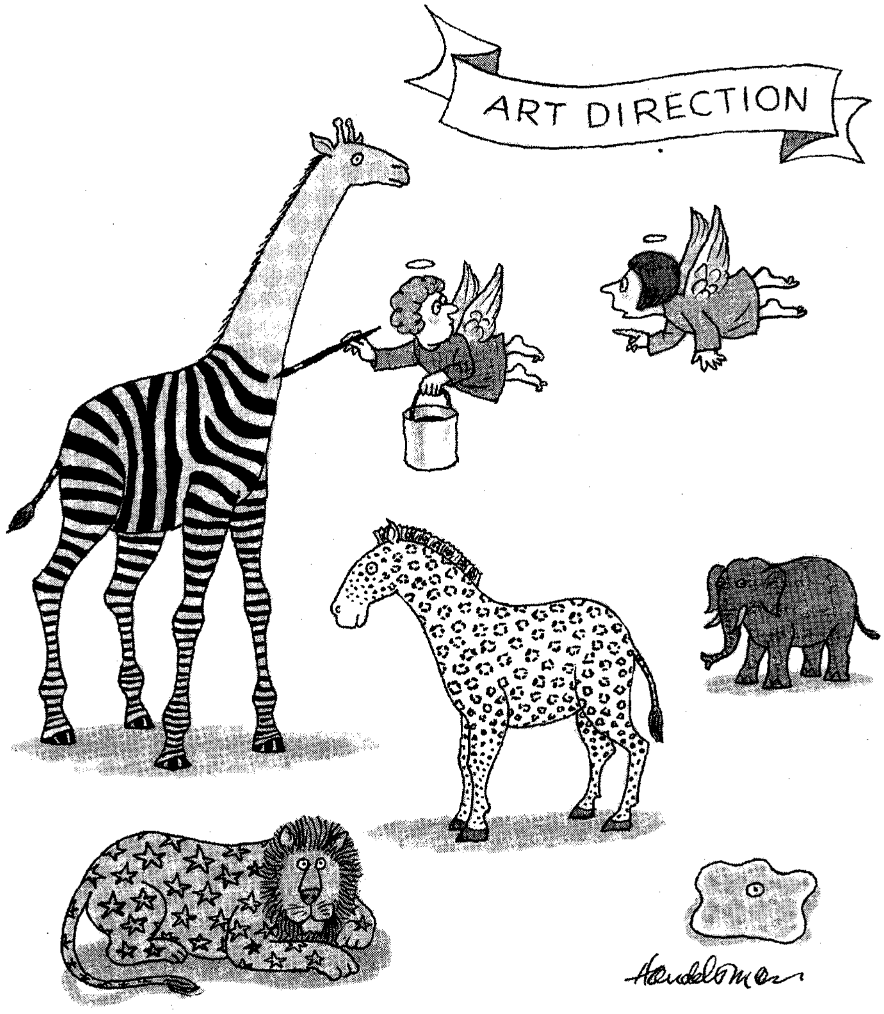
tried to tell him that he wasn't going to get the maid back—that she would eventually be deported, and then he would lose everything. He wasn't persuaded. "This is Kuwait, I'm Kuwaiti, and I'm going to get her out of the Embassy," he declared. "It's a matter of principle."

"Principle! His son tried to kill her and he's talking about principle!" Mrs. Brook said as she reported the conversation to her husband.

On three evenings recently, I went to a police station in the Dasma district of Kuwait City. It was a ramshackle three-story building, in which policemen in white robes lounged about on sagging vinyl-covered couches with the stuffing coming out. But the policemen had computers and cellular phones, and the air-conditioning was on full blast, with the door and the windows open. (Energy conservation is not a high priority in Kuwait.) The Dasma police station has become a sort of informal complaint-resolution center for runaway maids. Between five and six o'clock many evenings, buses arrive from the embassies with maids who have fled the homes of their employers; these days, most are from Sri Lanka and the Philippines. With the assistance of volunteers from their own countries, the women tell their stories to policemen. The hope is that the police can then persuade the employer to bring the woman her passport, a release, and maybe even money for a ticket home.

Perhaps sixty Sri Lankan and Philippine maids were at the station each evening I was there. I spoke with half a dozen Sri Lankans, all of whom had been beaten by the women they worked for. A number of people in Kuwait told me that Sri Lankan maids were probably treated worse than Philippine maids, and that they tended to endure more before fleeing—in part because they were less worldly and aggressive. Bader Nisa, one of the Sri Lankans I spoke with, had a large bruise on her upper left arm and another on her right shoulder blade; she also had bruises on her right forearm and her right leg. She was twenty-four years old, and was from a small village in northern Sri Lanka. "My father is sick, and there is no one to feed the family, so I came to Kuwait to get some money," she told me. (Many of the workers who go abroad on contracts send most of their earnings home to their families; this money is a major revenue source for many countries.) Nisa's family sold a small piece of land, and she borrowed from villagers, in order to raise the money to pay an agency in Colombo. She arrived in Kuwait on September 25th, and almost from the day she was hired, she said, the woman she worked for beat her. The day before I met her, she had been beaten so severely that she fled. She said that while she was cleaning the bathroom the woman tried to tell her something, but, because she didn't speak Arabic, she didn't understand. "She took the brush and started beating me," Nisa said. "She was yelling at me, but I didn't know what she was saying."



"Sorry—He's changed His mind again. Stripes on the zebra, spots on the giraffe, no stars on the lion, and make the elephant bigger and the amoeba smaller."

A second Sri Lankan, who was eighteen years old, told me that she had been beaten often by the woman she worked for. "Baba is a good man," she said, referring to the husband. "Sometimes he tried to stop Madame from beating me, but she doesn't listen to him." Asked why she hadn't fled earlier, she said, "I have written to my mother about this, and she told me, 'You must stay in that house, because you are still not married.'"

On another evening at the police station, I talked to a Philippine woman who had bruises on her legs. She told me that she had been beaten not by her employer but by a woman at the agency that had brought her to Kuwait. She had been taken to the agency by the woman she worked for, with the complaint that the maid did not work hard enough. This was not an isolated occurrence, a Philippine official told me later. He said that employers often took difficult maids to the employment agencies, and that there they were "some-

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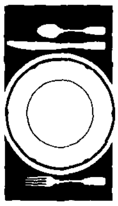

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times beaten, incarcerated, and not given food."

The next day, I called the agency that had brought in one of the Sri Lankan maids I had interviewed. The woman who answered told me that in addition to finding employment for foreign maids the agency specialized in cleaning windows, carpets, and marble floors. I knew that a recently enacted law requires that a potential employer must have a contract with a domestic employee before the employee can be brought into Kuwait, but when I asked if I needed a contract to bring in a maid the woman at the agency said no. I asked if I would have to give the maid a day off.

"It depends on you," she said.

What about the hours?

"There is no limit, because they are housemaids. They belong to you. It is not like in Europe or America."

I decided to visit the agency that had brought Jenny Casanova to Kuwait. It was housed in a small office on the third floor of a run-down building across from a municipal parking garage, and also served as an importing firm. The woman in charge of the maid-recruiting operation gave her name as Aisha, and told me that she had come to Kuwait from the Philippines several years ago as a maid. She, too, assured me that I did not need a contract, and that the hours and days a maid worked were up to me. Aisha said that the agency's fee for a Muslim would be three hundred dinars and the equivalent of three months' salary in advance; for a Christian, it would be two hundred and eighty dinars and two months' salary in advance. Though Aisha called part of the fee an advance, it wasn't, really, she explained: an employer recovers the advance from the maid. "She has to work in your house for two or three months without salary—or you can deduct half her salary for four months," Aisha said.

When I asked about hiring a Philippine maid, Aisha said that that would be difficult. Because of alleged abuses, she said, the Philippine government had placed tight restrictions on the freedom of young women to come to Kuwait for work. When I returned to the agency a few hours later, however, she informed me that she had seven Philippine women in Qatar who were available to come to Kuwait; she even provided me with faxes of their passports. It is

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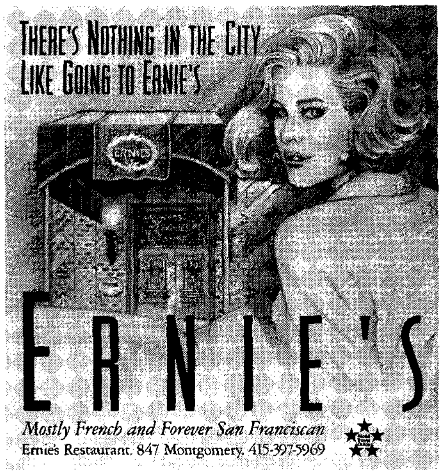
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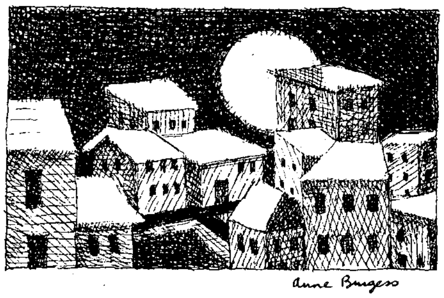
almost certain, according to Philippine diplomats, that these women had gone from the Philippines to Qatar in order to circumvent the restrictions on travelling to Kuwait.

"It's a case of exploitation, and of connivance by unscrupulous agencies in the Philippines and some in Kuwait," I was told by Lamberto Marin, the labor attaché at the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait. He said that corrupt immigration officials in the Philippines were also part of the scheme: they issued visas for young women to come to Kuwait even though the women didn't have the proper documents. In other cases, the women were told that they were going to work in Kuwait as dressmakers, beauticians, or saleswomen, Marin said, but when they reached Kuwait they had to work as domestics. And in some cases the duplicity has been even more egregious. One Philippine woman told me that she had been promised work in Dubai as a secretary, at a salary of five hundred dollars a month. "When we reached the airport in Dubai, a man took all our papers," she said. "There were twenty-nine of us—teachers, midwives, nurses." All twenty-nine were put on a plane to Kuwait, where their real employers were waiting for them.



KUWAITIS are surely among the most privileged and pampered people in history. With their vast oil wealth, they simply hire people to do almost all their work. Before the invasion by Iraq, on August 2, 1990, eighty per cent of the labor force was non-Kuwaiti, and there were two hundred thousand non-Kuwaiti servants in the country. "Every family had five or six servants," a Kuwaiti journalist told me recently. Since the invasion, the Kuwaitis have decided, for security reasons, to reduce the number of foreigners in the country. Consequently, in October of 1991 the Minister of the Interior issued regulations limiting the number of servants a family could employ. A family of five could have only two; a family larger than that could have four. Many Kuwaitis found such restrictions too harsh, however, and within a week the law was amended to allow a family to pay an annual fee if it wanted more servants—fifty dinars for the first, a hundred for the second, and so on, with no limit except the employer's willingness to pay the fees.

This year, more than two thousand Philippine maids have fled their employers and, like Jenny Casanova, have sought refuge in the Embassy. Each day, ten to twenty Sri Lankan maids show up at the Sri Lankan Embassy, complaining of underpayment, overwork, beatings. While the hardships these women endure are even worse in other Gulf states than they are in Kuwait—observers have told me that being a maid in Saudi Arabia or Dubai is akin to being a slave—more attention has been focussed on the problem in Kuwait, because, at least since its liberation, it has been a more open society. Kuwait has allowed into the country two fact-finding missions sent from New York by the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, and also an investigative team from Middle East Watch and the Women's Rights Project, which are part of the New York-based Human Rights Watch. I received a journalist's visa for Kuwait in only a few days, and once I was there numerous officials coöperated openly with me; it is almost impossible for a journalist to get a visa for Saudi Arabia, say, and the government there won't for a moment entertain the notion of human-rights activists or reporters wandering around the country and talking freely to people.

The reasons for the widespread mistreatment of maids in Kuwait and elsewhere are found partly in cultural traditions and values. "First, it is because they are women, and women are mistreated generally in Kuwait," Eman al-Bedah, a Kuwaiti human-rights activist, told me. "Second, because they are maids. They are lower-class, and people exercise their power over them." Bedah, a twenty-eight-year-old telecommunications engineer, lives at home, and her mother employs two Sri Lankan maids. She allows them to attend religious services, and they may receive phone calls and

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22 TUESDAY
23 WEDNESDAY
24 THURSDAY
25 FRIDAY
26 SATURDAY
SUNDAY
JUNE 1993
9:30 Agency meeting
Drop off car for inspection
10:30 Meet with lawyers to discuss deposition
10am Department Meeting - Survey results
Racquetball
1:15 Jill and Frank to discuss new construction
Racquetball
1pm Chin Chin with Ellen
8pm Foundation meeting
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have visits from friends. "Our neighbors say we are spoiling them," Bedah told me.

Much of the reporting by journalists and human-rights groups about the mistreatment of maids in Kuwait has focussed on rape and sexual abuse by men, but Bedah told me that women, who are responsible for supervising the maids and have contact with them throughout the day, were guilty of most of the mistreatment. Of a woman who mistreats her maid Bedah said, "She's treating her maid the way her husband is treating her."

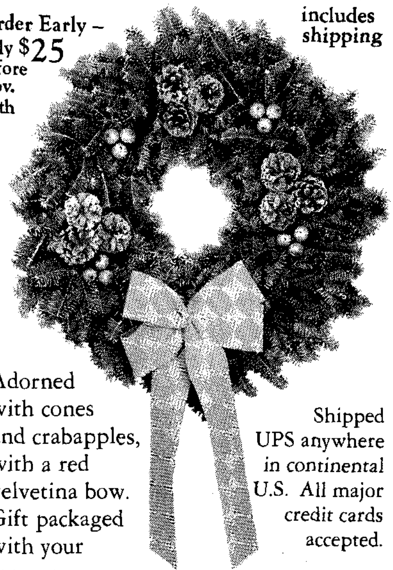
The status of women in Kuwait is marked by contradictions. Their political rights are severely circumscribed—they don't have the right to vote, for example—but the popular Western image of the veiled Arab woman, docile and subservient to her husband, doesn't apply in Kuwait. In Saudi Arabia, a woman is not allowed to drive, or to be seen in public with a man who isn't her husband, her father, a son, or a brother. In Kuwait, women drive expensive cars along freeways while talking on cellular phones. One woman I interviewed over dinner took charge of ordering the meal, even though the menu was in English and the waiter spoke English, and when the check came she grabbed it.

Kuwait's labor code, which was adopted in 1964, was an extraordinary piece of progressive legislation for its time, and it is exceptional even today. It protects children—no one under eighteen is allowed to work at night, for instance—and provides that "a female laborer shall be granted a wage similar to that of a man if she carries out the same work." American feminists are still campaigning for a federal law like that. In Kuwait, a new mother is entitled by law to ten weeks of paid maternity leave, and after she returns to work the law gives her the right to take up to two hours off every day to go home and breast-feed her baby.

"We enjoy everything except our political rights," Dr. Moudi al-Houmoud told me one day. From 1983 to 1989, Dr. Houmoud was the dean of the School of Commerce of Kuwait University, and she still teaches there; she is also part owner of a management-consulting firm, where I met with her. In Kuwait's professional and business worlds, women do well, she said. At Kuwait University a few years ago, four of seven deans were women; the student body, of thirteen thousand, is today more than sixty per cent female. At the government-financed Kuwait News Agency, the deputy editor of the English desk and the deputy editor of the Arabic desk are women. Dr. Houmoud told me that the progress of women in Kuwait, at least in comparison to other Arab countries, could be traced to the era before oil was discovered, when Kuwait was a marine economy. "Men made their money from the sea, either diving for pearls or fishing, so they were away for long periods," she said. "That left the woman to run the whole show. From that history, her character developed." She said that as early as the nineteen-thirties young Kuwaiti women were being educated at home, and by the fifties they had begun to go abroad for their education—mostly to Egypt. "These women were pioneers," Dr. Houmoud said. "They went abroad to be educated and then returned home with modern ideas." In the sixties, some Kuwaiti women publicly demonstrated against the wearing of the aba, a head-to-ankle cloak. And in the past couple of decades more and more Kuwaiti women have been going to the United States, England, and France to study, and returning home with more ideas about the rights of women.

The Gulf War brought further freedom for women. "The liberation of Kuwait has liberated Kuwaiti women," a twenty-seven-year-old Kuwaiti journalist named Khouloud al-Feeli told me. She said that the liberation of women had come about partly because during the occupation Kuwaiti women led public demonstrations against Saddam Hussein and were also active in the underground resistance. Besides, since the war Kuwait has prevented the return of some three hundred thousand Palestinians who fled during the occupation, many of whom held managerial jobs. Now these positions have to be filled, "and the best Kuwaiti man for the job is a Kuwaiti woman," Feeli said.

Despite the number of women in executive positions, a woman "can't go to the top of the ladder—only three-quarters of the way," Dr. Houmoud told me. Of the hundred largest companies in Kuwait, only three have women on their boards of directors, she said. "It's still a



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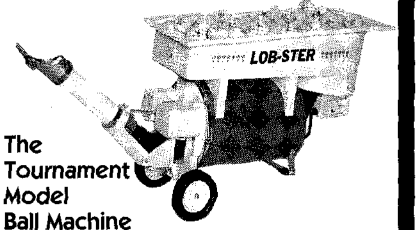

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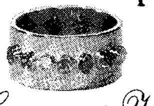

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male-dominated society, still a man's world."

THE Asian maids in Kuwait suffer from more than just being women in a male-dominated society, however. They are foreigners in an extremely closed and xenophobic society. You aren't automatically entitled to citizenship unless you can prove that your family was in Kuwait before 1920. That leaves tens of thousands of essentially stateless people, called *bidun jinsiyyah* (the phrase means "without nationality")—many of them people who were born in Kuwait and have lived their entire lives in Kuwait, and whose fathers and grandfathers were born there, but who are not Kuwaiti citizens. Even other Arabs are considered inferior by the Kuwaitis, and the maids, being Asians, are at the bottom of the heap.

"People don't see it as a problem; they don't think that many are mistreated," Ghanim al-Najjar, one of Kuwait's most prominent human-rights activists, told me in October. "We have a lot of maids in this country, and abuse and mistreatment are not very common." Referring to a recent report by Middle East Watch that is a comprehensive documentation of the problem, he said, "They don't talk about the ninety-nine per cent, or more, of the maids who are not being raped or mistreated." As for the failure of the Kuwaiti government to protect the maids, he said, "Whatever happens to the maids is happening inside the house, and what goes on inside the house is personal. In Kuwait, homes are traditionally and constitutionally sacred places." In other words, it is not the business of the state to regulate anything that happens in the home. He also said, "It's very hard to know what really happened. If a maid says she's been beaten or neglected, how on earth do you prove that?"

Some American human-rights activists speak disparagingly about Najjar because of his views on the maids, but he has demonstrated a vigorous commitment to human rights. He was a founder of the Amnesty International chapter in Kuwait in the late nineteen-eighties, at a time when the country was far less open politically than it is today, and in 1991 he was a founder of the Kuwaiti Association to Defend War Victims, a broad-based human-rights organization, of which he is currently the chairman.

Najjar is not the only Kuwaiti with

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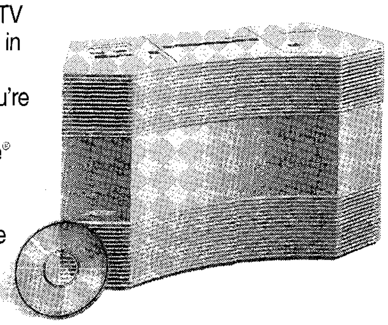

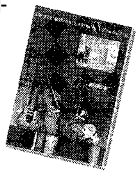

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human-rights credentials who thinks that the maids' problem has been exaggerated by foreigners. "If one thousand or two thousand are treated badly, it's not a daily practice," I was told by Meshari al-Osaimi, another founder of the Kuwaiti Association to Defend War Victims. He is also the head of the Kuwait Lawyers' Association, and in Kuwait's parliamentary election on October 5th—the first since the Assembly was dissolved by the Emir in 1986—he was elected as a member of the opposition. "I don't think it's a human-rights issue," he added. As he sees it, the solution to the maids' problem is quite simple: amend the labor law so that it includes maids. Back in 1964, when the law was enacted, it specifically excluded domestic servants, because, Osaimi said, at that time only the royal family and the very wealthy had servants.

It would be tempting to dismiss Najjar's and Osaimi's views as reflecting the male chauvinism of Kuwaiti society. But Dr. Houmoud also characterized the situation with the maids as a legal problem. "The maids are being treated badly because there is no law," she said. According to her and several other women I spoke with, women's-rights groups are not likely to take up the maid issue, and my questions seemed to take them by surprise. "I don't *think* existing groups see it as a problem—or not a big problem, at least," one woman activist explained.

The Kuwaiti government has recently enacted regulations to license the recruiting agencies, but these regulations are not likely to be enforced, Western diplomats in Kuwait say, since the agencies are owned by Kuwaitis. And even though Kuwait does have laws against assault, they have not been enforced when a maid has been attacked by her employer. Officials in the Ministry of the Interior, which has responsibility for the maids, could provide no documentation of any man's having been prosecuted for the rape of a maid, or of a woman's having been prosecuted for beating a maid; Philippine and Sri Lankan diplomats said that they were aware of no criminal prosecutions of employers for assaults on maids. It seems unlikely that the situation will change until the Kuwaitis themselves are willing to acknowledge the seriousness of the problem. ♦

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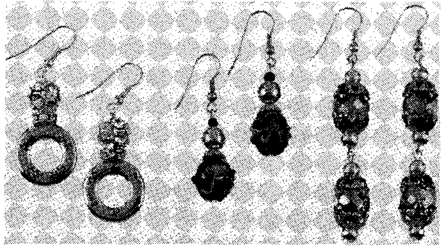

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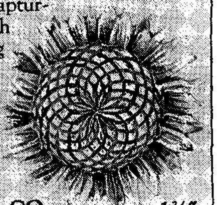

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

CHANGE

by Elizabeth Drew

GERARD NICOLAS

NOVEMBER 5

AIDED by hindsight, many will conclude that the outcome of this year's Presidential election was clear all along, but it wasn't. Though the clues were there some time ago, few saw them, and even fewer took them seriously. Among the ones who did was the late Paul Tully, a genius strategist for the Democratic Party, who early last year—while George Bush was still riding the Desert Storm wave—went from would-be candidate to would-be candidate with charts and graphs backing up his instinct that the main issue in this election would be domestic policy and that Bush's tremendous popularity would fade and the Democrats would have a chance of winning. (Tully, forty-eight, died of a heart attack in Little Rock in late September.) Another longsighted person was Bill Clinton. While other, "first string" Democrats decided that George Bush couldn't be beaten, Clinton decided to risk himself. Though it was commonly assumed that Clinton got into the race, as many do, as a "nothing to lose" candidate—run the first time to get your sea legs and national exposure, and then be ready when the real chance comes—his close friends insist that Clinton saw the possibility of victory all along.

That Clinton entered the race having, as many of his friends here said, "figured it out"—a claim suggesting that he was more formula than beliefs—didn't make him universally appealing among Democrats, and their embrace of him later was a matter of sheer pragmatism (or opportunism). There were several times when it seemed that Clinton might lose the nomination, and, as it was, he prevailed over a weak field. In late May and early June, he was running third, behind Bush and Ross Perot. Until not very long before the July Convention, many Democrats assumed that they were about to nominate a dead man. His selection of Al Gore as his running mate the week before the Convention, and the wave of positive public reaction that followed, was the first glimmer of hope they had.

Clinton's own staff didn't consider the election to be in the bag until late last week. The Clinton people jumped hard on a Gallup poll for CNN and *USA Today*, on the Wednesday before the election, that put Clinton ahead by only two points. They argued strenuously that the poll had suddenly—and wrongly—changed its methodology; they were worried that it might affect the psychology of the race and that Bush would in fact draw even. Campaigns are constantly telling the public how to interpret polls, in accordance with their political needs of the moment. Sometimes they worry that a wide lead will make people complacent or even decide to be contrarian and "send a message" to the front-runner. Sometimes they don't worry—at least aloud—over tight polls, because they want their potential voters to believe that their votes count, and they want to keep field workers energized. But last week, at the same time that the Gallup poll was showing a two-point gap, the Clinton camp's internal

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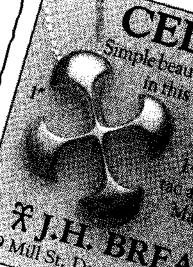

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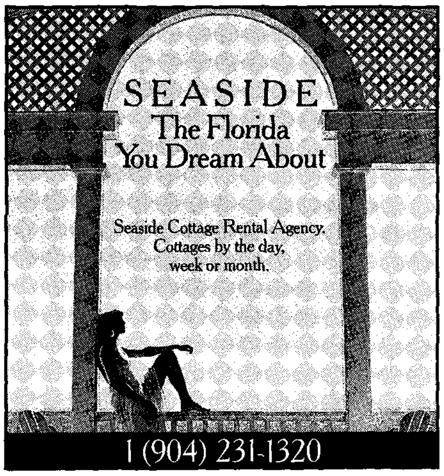

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polls were showing a five-point gap, and both the campaign and the candidate became worried that Clinton's lead, which had been in double digits not long before, would collapse. The Clinton camp had been saying that the race would tighten, but, for any campaign, actually experiencing the tightening is a far more frightening thing than the anticipation of it.

Despite the twists and turns, however, and despite Clinton's rather narrow victory in the popular vote—as opposed to his overwhelming Electoral College victory—Clinton has to be credited with a virtual ability to see around corners. His understanding that the way to win was to position himself as "a different kind of Democrat" was basic to his strategy and perhaps crucial to his victory. We'll never know—and Democrats disagree over—whether any of the possible candidates presumed more "eminent" could have won. Clinton also has to be credited with extraordinary resilience. Other candidates in the kind of trouble he was in last winter in New Hampshire, over Gennifer Flowers and the draft (his own polls showed him in a free-fall), might not have made it—and he almost didn't. Clinton ran a smart—though not flawless—campaign. And he was helped by the fact that his main opponent ran an abysmal campaign.

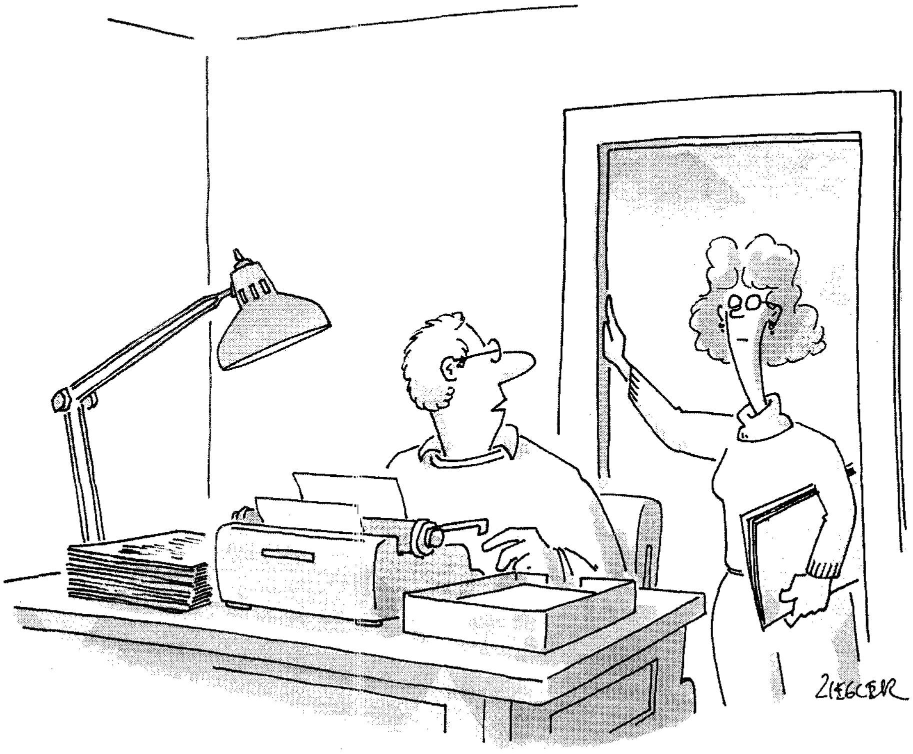
Bush and his key political advisers, including James Baker, misread the year, the country, and their opponent. They really did think that the way to defeat Clinton was to do to him what they had done to Michael Dukakis four years earlier. They seemed not to understand the anger that the voters had registered in the midterm elections in 1990—one symptom of which was a strong anti-incumbent wave—or the fact that this year the country had serious issues on its mind. They didn't grasp, until it was far too late, the importance of the economy as an issue. For much of this year, they thought that the economy would improve sufficiently to satisfy the voters. When it didn't, they didn't know what to do—except attack Clinton. Meanwhile, one of the smartest things the Democrats did was to refight—and win—the battle of 1988: to say enough times that the Bush campaign would be dirty, and to remind people of the Willie Horton issue enough that the Bush campaign was at least somewhat inhibited. Not entirely, of course, but its attempts to make an issue of Clinton's trip to Moscow while he was a student at Oxford backfired, and its criticisms of his leading antiwar demonstrations in London were of no avail. There's good reason to think that the Bush campaign had hoped to go further with these issues, and tried to dig up what it thought would be incriminating evidence—but those efforts got nowhere, and there's also reason to question how the public would have reacted.

TOWARD the end, Bush was clearly determined to not be seen as giving up—as a number of people thought he had when they saw his listless performance in the first two debates. In a television interview shortly before the election, Bush said, "I don't like it, being written off." And he added that people had asked, "Has this guy lost his fight?" and "Has George Bush really got the drive to do this?" But having opted not to run a positive campaign—or not knowing how to—Bush was reduced at the end to shrill carping at Clinton and a lot of complaining about the media. Bush had a point in saying that many in the media were biased against him (a number of them were tired of him and his Administration), but his public whining ("I'm sick and tired of it") didn't do him much good—nor were his real problems the result of media bias. Bush and his people also tried to lay the bad economy off on the media—saying that the economy wasn't so bad, it was just that the media were so negative in their reports about it. But people knew their own economic circumstances, and concerns. The one bit of genuine good news, announced in late October—that the gross domestic product had grown at an annual rate of 2.7 per cent—didn't do much for him. Nor did Bush's poignant attempts to raise people's doubts about turning over the conduct of foreign policy to the governor of a small state. Bush may have had a point, but it was an obviously irrelevant one this year, and in praising his own conduct of foreign policy—which by the time of the election had become fairly controversial (especially in the case of Iraq)—he seemed almost like an old general wanting to tell us again and again about his earlier victories. So the "red phone" stratagem, employed in ads and in Bush's speeches, failed.

Thus Bush was reduced to attacking Clinton's character—raising again and again the question of whether Clinton could be "trusted" to be President—and making much of the fact (sometimes distorting it) that Clinton would increase taxes. But the "trust" issue wasn't a completely free shot for Bush. Among other things, there was the news on the Friday before the election of the notes by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger which made it as clear as anything could that Bush had been lying about his role in the Iran-Contra affair. The notes showed that Bush was hardly "out of the loop," as he claimed, and that he had advocated the trade of arms for hostages. Bush and his people reacted contradictorily: they cried foul that the independent counsel's office had made the material public on the eve of the election—and they dismissed it as "nothing new."

We'll never know whether Bush had lost the election before the campaign began: whether his inattention to domestic issues, and his inability to talk about them, and the long and more than usually disturbing recession doomed him from the start. That the campaign grew so close at some points—early in the summer and then in the final week (too late to help Bush enough)—and the vote for Clinton wasn't an overwhelming one suggests that if Bush had known how to present himself to the voters as engaged in domestic issues, and how to run a decent (in both senses) campaign, he might have had a chance.

The picture that Bush presented toward the end was a sad one: the President of the United States stripped (by himself) of his dignity. He showed something his advisers had hoped wouldn't reappear—his "goofy" side. His calling his opponents "bozos" and "crazy" and referring to Gore as "Ozone" robbed him of his Presidentialness, and offended many voters. (Gore remarked in Michigan, "He seems to like 'z's.") Bush's lines also demonstrated his rather awkward way of trying to show he's "with it": "This guy is crazy—way out, far out, man." Some of Bush's own supporters were disheartened. A Presidential adviser said that in order to show more vitality Bush had been moved away from giving stump speeches and persuaded to talk instead from bulleted points on cards. The aide continued, "While there's a certain risk, you have the advantage of someone not looking



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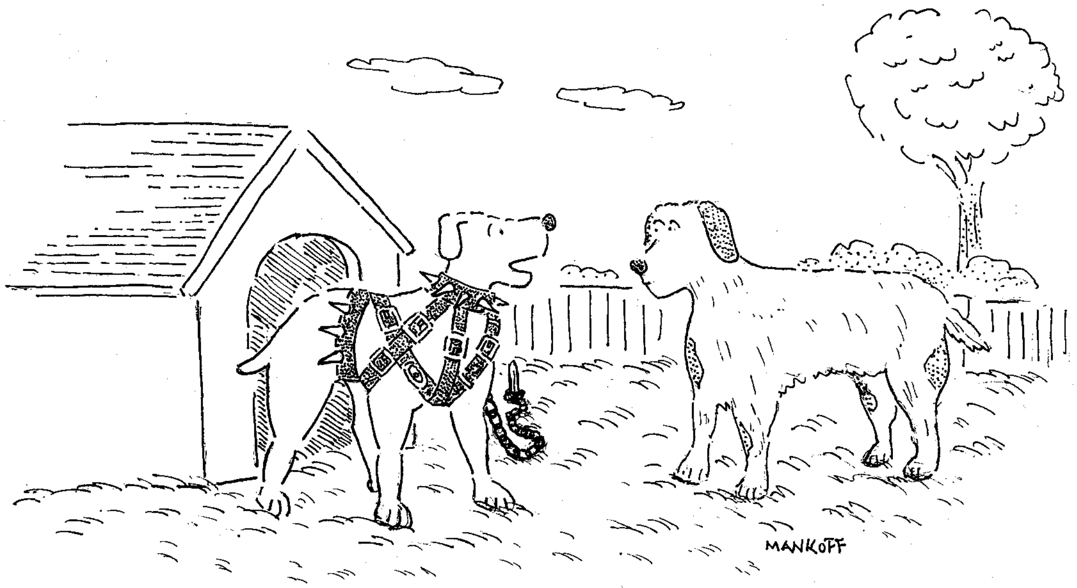


"Personally, I find it very empowering."

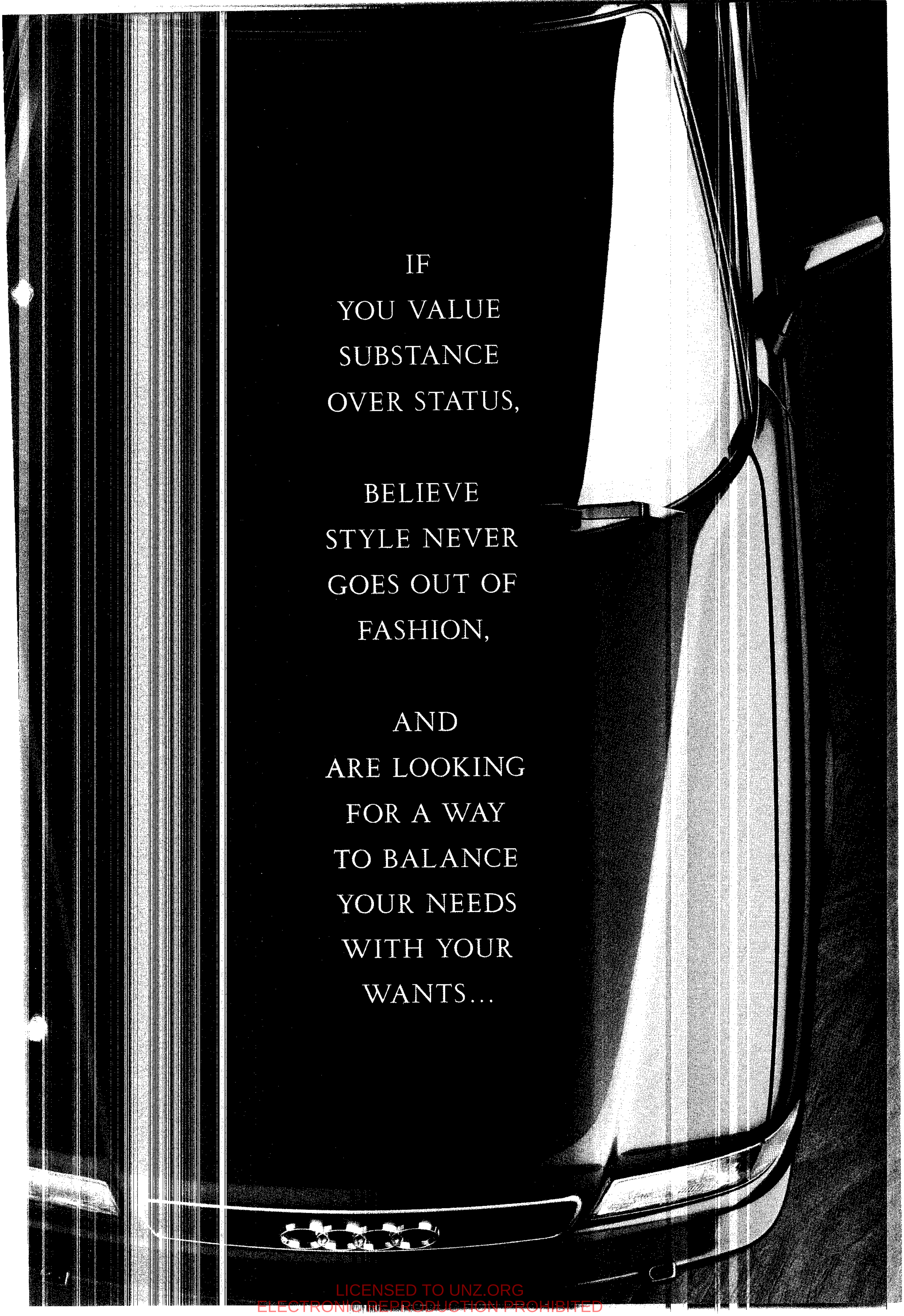
down at notes, and therefore showing more verve and energy." Bush's remarks backfired, and he dropped "crazy" and cut down on "bozo." His "crazy" remark gave Clinton an opening: "I think crazy is unemployment going up and incomes going down." (Clinton's advisers knew that whatever he said with the word "crazy" in it would be the sound bite on television.)

But for a while in the final week Clinton let Bush set the agenda, and spent too much time (as his campaign saw it) answering him. In an appearance on "Larry King Live," he seemed petulant, complaining at length, and even whining (usually Bush's province), about Bush's attacks on him. At other points in the appearance, he talked campaign strategy, instead of giving his vision of the future. Clinton was his own top strategist, but this kind of talk should have been confined to campaign meetings. He offered no real reason that people should vote for him. Clinton brought along a chart for this appearance; just as pamphlets had become de rigueur earlier in the campaign, now it was chart season. Dan Quayle appeared on talk shows with a chart that was to demonstrate steady growth, and said, "We . . . have the largest economy in the history of the world." Ross Perot was, of course, the father of the charts.

Clinton did, however, stay with his message to a large extent, and he was more disciplined than most Presidential candidates in recent memory. By making the race a referendum on Bush's record, and offering himself as the candidate of "change," he made a two-pronged attack on the incumbent President. By urging people to "have the courage to vote for change," he was both trying to offset Bush's charge that he was too big a risk and using the old trick of making the act of voting for him an ennobling one. But he was fairly vague until late in the game about what he planned to do as President, and the last big decision his campaign made, five days before the election, was that all the final advertising be about Clinton's plan. The Clinton polling had found that people thought Perot had a better plan. The people were right, but the Clinton campaign tried to offset their impression by running ads pointing out that ten Nobel Prize winners and four hundred business executives had endorsed his plan, and that John White, who had drawn up Perot's plan, had endorsed Clinton. Clinton was particularly pleased with his business backing—especially the endorsement of John Sculley, the head of Apple Computer. Clinton and Gore's real interest in high tech and their pledges to have the government make more investments in it were obviously appealing to these people.

Getting business support was just one of the ways Clinton defined himself as "a different kind of Democrat"—a definition that may have been crucial to his victory. In effect, the strategy of the Democratic Leadership Conference, of which Clinton was a founder, worked. The strategy was a pragmatic one, and bothered many liberals: its premise was that the Democrats can't win the White House if they are too identified with blacks and the poor and are seen as weak on defense and too tied to the special-interest groups of the Democratic Party. Clinton tried to follow the strategy faithfully, but at times in the primaries—especially in New York—he looked like a traditional Democrat, out to please (pander to) the interest groups. The emphasis that Clinton's aides put on his need to stress the "different Democrat" theme, particularly toward the end of the campaign, suggests how important they considered it. Clinton carried out the strategy through his emphasis on welfare reform and on personal responsibility and his carefully choreographed appearances before black groups. (The Democrats were nonetheless eager to get out the black vote, which can be crucial to victory in some states, and it was higher—as was the over-all turnout—than in 1988.) He was also careful not to get caught to the "left" of Bush on foreign policy. Most liberals lost whatever misgivings they had when they realized that, of all things, the Party might have a winner.

ROSS PEROT'S reëntry probably achieved more than he had hoped. His main desire seems to have been to erase the tag of "quitter." Then his bizarre interview with "60 Minutes" nine days before the election and his temper tantrum at a press conference the next day showed aspects of his nature that he had kept hidden since he reëntered—the signs of paranoia, and even delusion, and his temperament, which made him ill-suited to the ruggedness of politics, not to mention the Presidency. Perot's tales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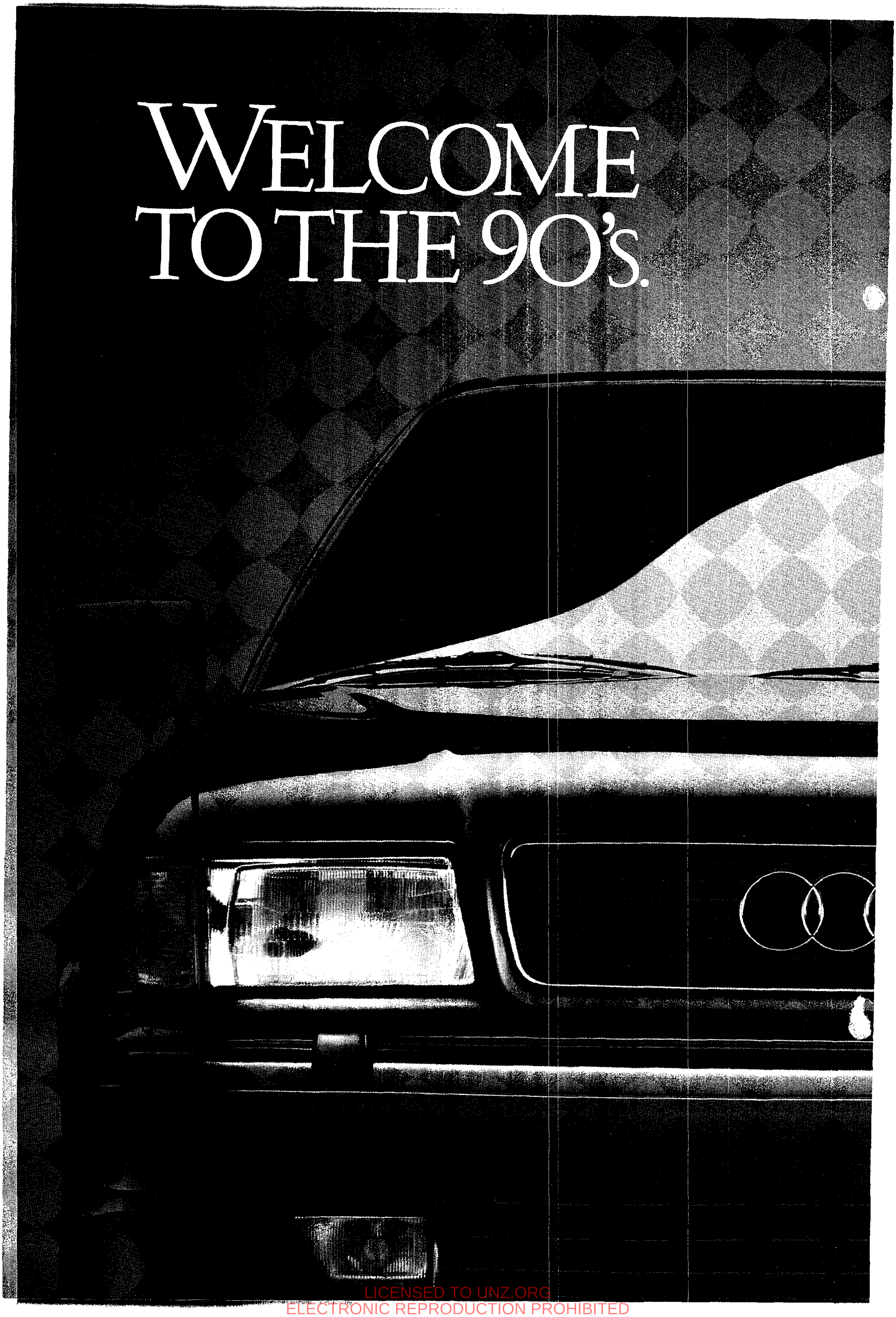
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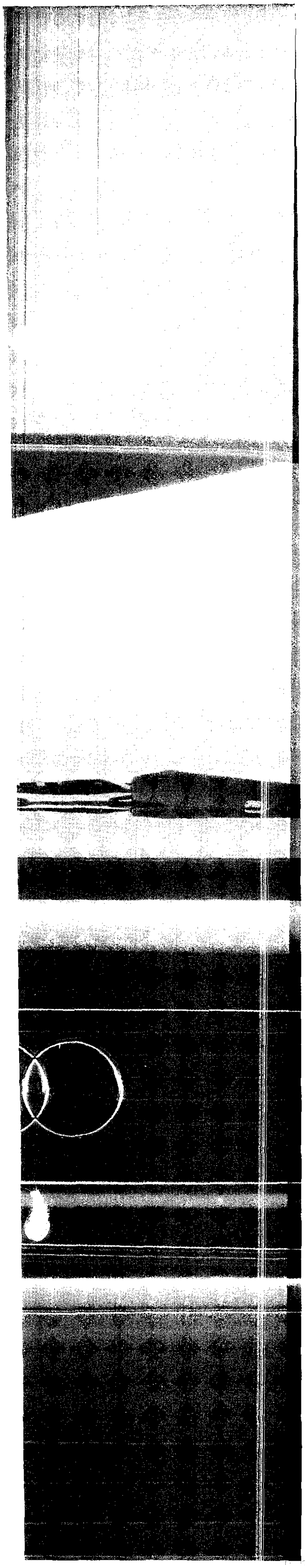

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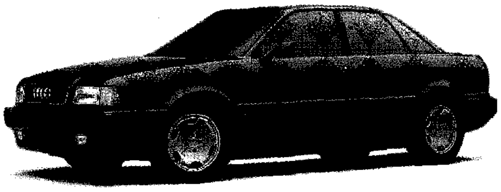

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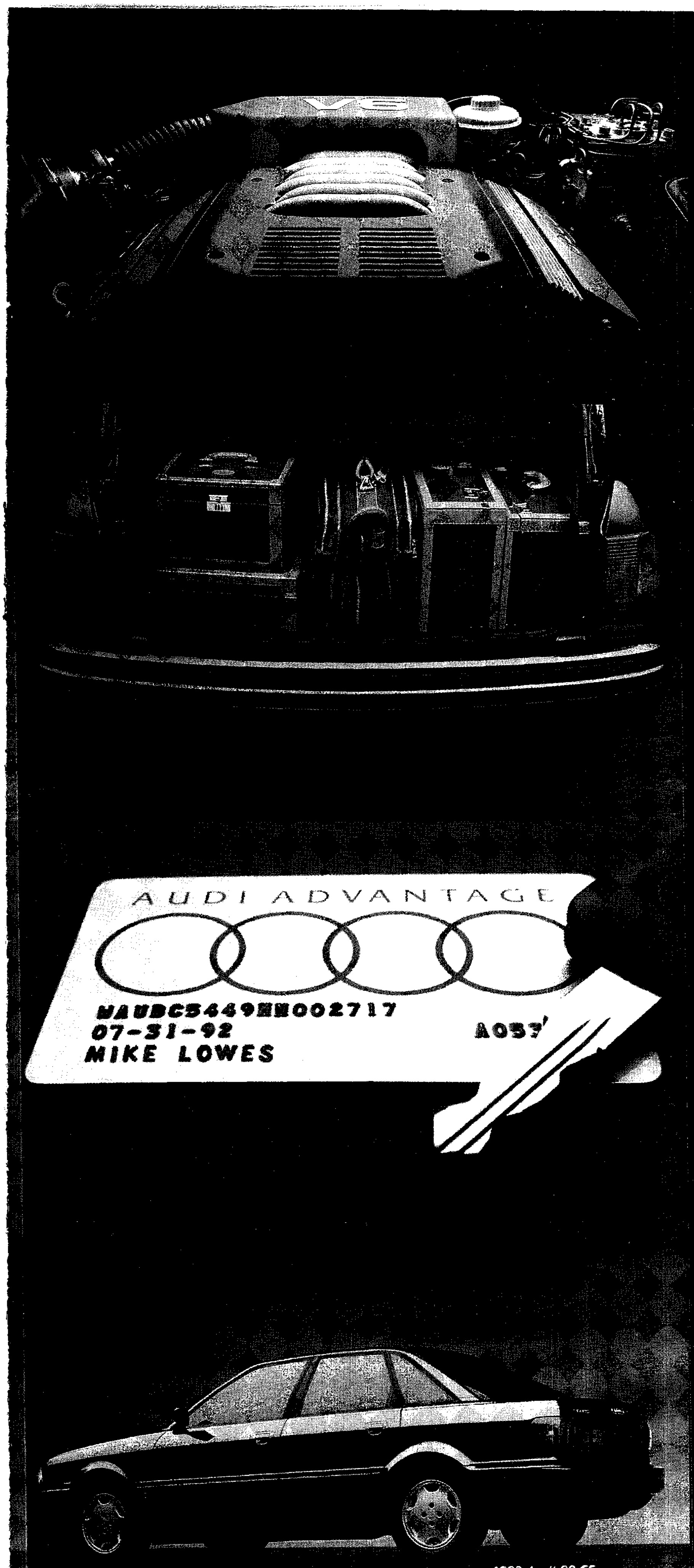

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about his having left the campaign because he had received warnings that the Bush campaign would try to disrupt his daughter's wedding, and his detailed recounting of an attempt on his life in 1970 by five Black Panthers (sent by the North Vietnamese) who had entered his property but were chased off by a dog (which bit one of them severely) should have given more people pause than they apparently did. (One of Perot's security guards at the time said later that he'd never heard this story, and the head of the Dallas police intelligence unit said it couldn't have happened.) Perot's "infomercials" continued to draw large audiences, even if he wasn't as bold with the hard truths as he had said he would be. He barely mentioned the unpopular tax increases and other difficult measures he was proposing. Though he spent an estimated sixty million dollars of his own money on his campaign, this didn't become an issue—but it might be a precedent. His final campaign appearance—with him mocking his critics by playing the Patsy Cline song "Crazy," dancing with his daughter, and leaning over backward as he uttered his braying laugh—was like a scene in a Mel Brooks movie.

THE Clinton campaign evokes much admiration from Republicans—moving even Dan Quayle to say on Election Night, "If he runs the country as well as he ran his campaign, we'll be all right." The Republican strategist Ed Rollins says that the Clinton campaign was the smartest Democratic campaign he'd ever seen. It was run by a group of smart people who—while there were tensions among them—got along better than people in most Democratic campaigns have. In part, this had to do with their being stationed (to no small number of groans) in Little Rock, where there were few diversions and it was as if they were in boot camp. (However, pent-up tensions did spill over just after the election, when it came time for Clinton to choose the head of his transition team, and campaign aides jockeyed for position in the Clinton White House.) The Clinton campaign did several innovative things (such as buying as little network time as possible for ads, and spending the money where it was needed most), and it deliberately expanded the playing field, so as to make Bush fight hard on his own turf, using up much time and money on states Republicans usually win, and to give the Democrats a lot of options for picking up the necessary two hundred and seventy votes in the Electoral College.

Clinton's electoral landslide (three hundred and seventy votes to Bush's hundred and sixty-eight) was a far greater victory than was his five-point lead in the popular vote (Clinton, 43; Bush, 38; Perot, 19), but the fight was over the Electoral College. Clinton received less than a ringing mandate, and will have to solidify his position with the public even before he takes office. Perot's strong showing, despite everything, indicated the large desire for doing things differently in our politics—and for (apparent) straight talk. (It may also have been boosted by the widespread predictions that Clinton would win, thus making a vote for Perot a free vote.) Exit polls indicated that people said the economy was by far the most important issue, followed by the deficit. The voters have been showing a maverick, reform-minded streak all year, starting with the support for the improbable Jerry Brown—or even for Paul Tsongas, with his talk of hard (or relatively hard) economic choices. Perot represents a movement, which Clinton will try to harness—perhaps around the issue of political reform. The trick is to bring Perot in enough to win the support of his followers but not so much that he can be a pain. This won't be easy. Perot's voters were registering dissatisfaction with both of the other candidates. In the exit polls, they split almost evenly over whether their second choice would have been Clinton or Bush. To broaden his base, Clinton has spoken of forming a government of Democrats, Republicans, and independents.

Despite his pale mandate, much is expected of Clinton. Having run on "change," he will have to produce something that the public recognizes as change—for the better. During his campaign, he tried to lower expectations—saying, "We didn't get into this mess overnight and we're not going to get out of it overnight"—at the same time that he was raising them. He promised many things—not all of them fully worked through, or compatible. He now confronts a lot of hard realities even as he enjoys the buoyancy of victory. ♦

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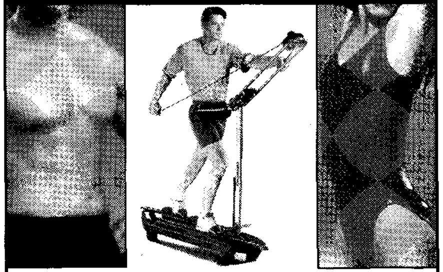

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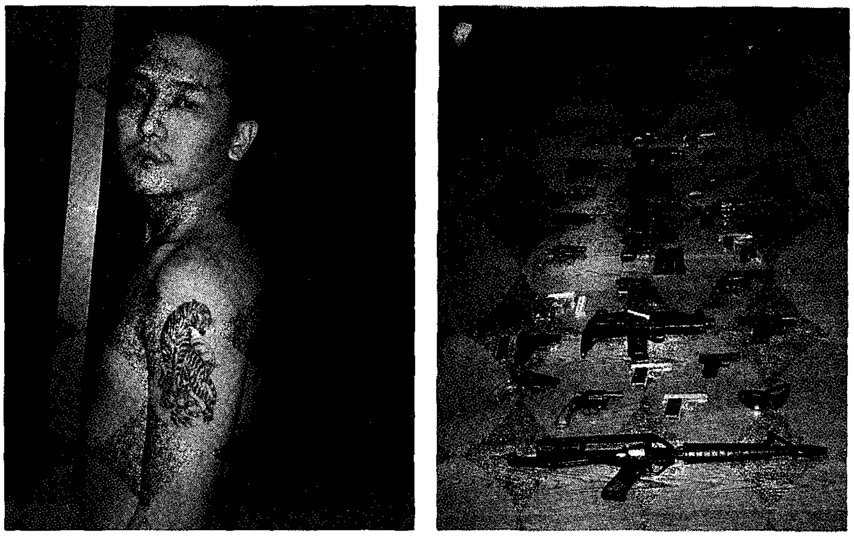
ANNALS OF CRIME

REVENGE OF THE GREEN DRAGONS

by Fredric Dannen

AROUND seven o'clock on the night of July 16, 1989, Anthony Gallivan went out drinking. He was joined by his wife, Christine, and another couple. The Gallivans, who were both in their early thirties, were born in Ireland, but at present they lived in Jackson Heights, Queens. It was wet and windy, so the two couples took a cab to the Liffey Pub, an Irish bar in Elmhurst. They laughed and talked and drank Guinnesses until after nine, and then decided they were hungry for Chinese food.



By the time he was twenty, Chen I. Chung had become the dai lo, or street boss, of the Green Dragons, a Chinese gang that terrorized the Asian community of Elmhurst, Queens. After I. Chung's arrest in a federal murder-and-racketeering case, police raided gang sites in Queens and seized an arsenal of thirty-one weapons.

This was a commodity not hard to come by in Elmhurst. In two decades, Elmhurst, Flushing, and other sections of Queens within a two-mile radius of Shea Stadium have become a second Chinatown, cleaner and more prosperous than the one in lower Manhattan. (The No. 7 subway train to Flushing has been dubbed the Orient Express.) The Gallivans and their friends ducked into the Tien Chau, a Taiwanese restaurant just a short jog from the Liffey Pub. They had planned to order takeout, but now it was raining heavily, so they sat down at a table for four.

The Tien Chau was a small restaurant, with only about a dozen tables, and at nine-thirty on a wet night it was almost empty. Seated near the cash register, Gregory Hyde and his Chinese-American wife, Carol Huang, were getting ready to leave. When they got up to pay the check, two well-dressed Chinese boys were arguing with the manager, a thirty-five-year-old Taiwanese named Mon Hsiung Ting. Well, Greg figured, we might as well sit down and let them finish their discussion. Moments later, Greg heard what sounded like firecrackers. When he turned around, one of the boys was crouching, his feet spread apart. He was firing a pistol.

"Carol, duck!" Greg yelled. Carol dived under the table, her eyes on the shooter. The boy caught her looking at him. She later estimated that they made eye contact for two or three seconds—long enough for her to fix an image in her mind of a handsome young man with spiky hair, huge eyes, and, for an Asian, very fair skin. He wore a black suit and a white shirt with black pinstripes. He appeared quite calm. Then he fired in Carol's direction, and she instinctively covered her face with her hands.

Greg Hyde was struggling to get under the table as well. His back was to the shooter. He tried to slide out of his chair, but it was stuck, and when he pushed back hard he was forced upright. Suddenly, his legs gave way under him, and he knew that he had been shot. Hyde fell to the floor, face forward, on his arm. He tried to move, but his legs were paralyzed. He could feel his body going into shock.

At her table toward the rear of the restaurant, Christine Gallivan looked over to her left and saw her dish fall. Her husband clutched his chest and said, "Christine, I think I've been hit!" She glanced up and saw a young man with a small, "James Bond-type" gun, his arms bouncing in recoil after each shot. Blue smoke rose in the background. Tony Gallivan was sliding off his chair. One of his friends grabbed him and laid him on the ground on his back. There was blood on his T-shirt in the middle of his chest, a dot the size of a pen top. It was an exit wound; the bullet had entered his back on the right side and passed through his heart. Christine was screaming. She later recalled, "I held him in my arms, and his eyes rolled and his color changed. And I figured he died then."

The restaurant manager, Mon Hsiung Ting, staggered out from behind the cash register and collapsed, dead, in the middle of the floor. His blood was splattered on the wall mirrors, and gushed out of holes in his body. He had been shot nine times, by both boys.

The second boy grabbed his companion in the black suit and pulled him out the door. Carol got up from under the table and screamed at a waitress to open the cash register for a quarter to phone 911. She returned to her husband's side, and Greg said an Act of Contrition. He believed he was dying. He would live, though, crippled for life; a bullet had entered his shoulder and damaged his spine. Carol had escaped unharmed, and she had seen so much that in time the boy in the black suit would regret not having killed her.

About four miles south of the Tien Chau restaurant, in an apartment on Eighty-seventh Road in Woodhaven, Queens, the man who had ordered the shooting was debriefing the two assassins. His name was Chen I. Chung, and he was the *dai lo*, or big brother, of a Chinese gang called the Green Dragons. *Dai lo* is a term of respect accorded to one's elders, or to a boss, in a gang, and Chen I. Chung was both a boss and an older gang member. He was twenty.

The Green Dragons were based in Elmhurst, and their principal competition in the borough of Queens was a Flushing gang known as the White Tigers. The Dragons and the Tigers maintained an uneasy truce, and on occasion ranking members of the two gangs would sit down in a restaurant or a night club and attempt to resolve territorial disputes. Besides mutual animosity, the Green Dragons and the White Tigers had something else in common: both were patterned after established gangs in Manhattan's Chinatown. Youth gangs started to emerge in Chinatown in the sixties and seventies, and they have a distinctive culture—a bizarre mixture of traits borrowed from the Hong Kong triads (secret criminal societies) and the clichés of American and Chinese gangster movies. Gang members dress all in black and have their chests and arms tattooed with dragons, serpents, tigers, and sharp-taloned eagles. They can be as young as thirteen. Once enlisted, a gang member loses contact with family and school; the gang becomes both. Members live in safe-house apartments, often several to a room. Gangs have territories—certain streets, certain hangouts—and the appearance of a rival gangster in the wrong place can lead to bloodshed.

It would be simplistic to compare gangs such as the Green Dragons and the White Tigers, as some have tried, to the Jets and the Sharks of "West Side Story," or even to the color gangs of Los Angeles. They are not youth gangs in the usual sense but, rather, a young form of organized crime. They have a clearly defined hierarchy, and junior members will obey the instructions from the *dai lo* or someone else of high rank even if the order is to kill for reasons not explained. Asian gangs engage in a recognizable pattern of racketeering, the bedrock crime being extortion. It is difficult to find a restaurant in Chinatown that is not shaken down for protection money by one gang or another on a regular basis.

The Green Dragons and the White Tigers imported this tradition into Queens. Sometimes the restaurants would put up a fight. This was not something that Chen I. Chung could allow. If word were to get around that a restaurant had successfully refused to pay the Green Dragons, no one would take the gang seriously. According to the testimony of former gang members (a prime source of information for this account), Chen I. Chung repeatedly complained that the manager of the Tien Chau, Mon Hsiung Ting, was "hardheaded." Finally, he decided to send a pair of Dragons to kill Ting. One of the boys he selected was Alex Wong, who had been the good-looking boy in the black suit. The other killer was Joseph Wang. Both boys were sixteen.

Now Alex and Joe were reporting back to Chen I. Chung after the shooting, and the *dai lo* was satisfied, with one reservation. Alex said that the customers had ducked when the shooting started—all except one man. He had stood up, so Alex had fired at him. (That was Gregory Hyde.) Alex perhaps did not realize that he had shot and killed Anthony Gallivan, but he knew that the man he had hit was Caucasian. Chen I. Chung did not like that part of the story. Victimizing a non-Asian might bring heat from law enforcement. Gangs did not think American justice cared much about Asians, and the Asian community seemed to agree, for most extortions and many armed robberies went unreported.

Chen I. Chung was Taiwanese. He was familiarly called I. Chung (with "I" pronounced like "E"). I. Chung had immigrated to Waco, Texas, in 1981, at thirteen, along with two older sisters and an older brother, and had moved to Chicago before settling in Queens. His parents opened a Chinese restaurant in Buffalo. He was about five foot seven and skinny, with a tattoo of a tiger on his left shoulder and a gold ring in his left ear. His face was catlike. On Christmas Eve, 1987, two Asian youths opened fire on I. Chung as he sat in his car, at a red light. He managed to drive to the hospital with a bullet lodged in his skull. Since then, I. Chung experienced severe headaches at times of stress. After eight years in America, he spoke almost no English. He had been with the Green Dragons from its inception, in 1985, and had moved steadily up the ladder. As *dai lo*, he had his own apartment and a platinum American Express card. It is commonly thought that gang members kill mostly one another. The Green Dragons dispelled that myth: they preyed on the innocent.

With two dozen active members at most, the Green Dragons was a relatively small gang compared with Chinatown gangs such as the Ghost Shadows and the Flying Dragons. It was also more autonomous, since the Chinatown gangs must answer to a more senior criminal hierarchy. Chinatown, which was established in the eighteen-hundreds, operates on a system of tongs, or fraternal societies, which constitute, quite literally, the local government. (The Hip Sing, with headquarters on Pell Street, is the largest and most powerful tong; next in line is the On Leong, on Mott Street; and then the Tung On, on Division Street. A fourth, the Fukien American Association, on East Broadway, is a comer.) The tongs control Chinatown's commerce, and allegedly profit from drug trafficking, gambling, and prostitution. Each tong enjoys the allegiance of a youth gang. The fear that gangs inspire in merchants is enormously useful to the tongs, which govern the community through intimidation.

The tongs and the gangs are often equated with Mafia enterprises, but a far better analogy is to the Black Hand, the precursor of the American Mafia which in the early part of the century also preyed on its own ethnic group—first-generation Italian immigrants who spoke little English and did not trust American law enforcement to protect them. Most of Chinatown's population is also foreign-born, and regards police and prosecutors with the same skepticism.

The government has exerted far more effort against "traditional" organized crime in America—the Mafia—than against Asian crime, which has existed here just as long. Prosecutors have a lot of catching up to do. While RICO, the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, has been used effectively against Mafia families, no successful RICO case has ever been brought against a tong. The government has been more successful in prosecuting the gangs. In 1985, Nancy Ryan, of the Manhattan District Attorney's Jade Squad, convicted twenty-five members of the Ghost Shadows of numerous acts of racketeering, including thirteen murders. The Ghost Shadows serve the On Leong tong. A few years ago, the Flying Dragons, the gang overseen by the Hip Sing tong, was infiltrated by a police officer, David Chong. Today a lieutenant in the New York Police Department and the highest-ranking Asian on the force, Chong fooled the Flying Dragons so thoroughly that he rose to the status of *dai lo* and became a street lieutenant, with a crew of twelve soldiers. Recently, Chong spoke about one of the most deplorable jobs of a *dai lo*, recruiting new gang members. This is typically done at school.

"I drove a Corvette, I had handfuls of money, the prettiest girls, the best jewelry, so you know what I would do?" Chong said. "I would have my kids go to a high school in Chinatown and look for the turkey right off the boat. You want him in ninth or tenth grade, he can't speak English, he's got a stupid haircut. And when you find this kid, you go beat the shit out of him. Tease him, beat him up, knock him around. We isolate this kid; he's our *target*. What will happen, one day I'll make sure I'm around when this kid is getting beaten up, and I'll stop it with the snap of my finger. He'll look at me—he'll see that I have a fancy car, girls, I'm wearing a beeper—and I'll turn around and say, 'Hey kid, how come these people are beating on you?' I'm gonna be this kid's hero, this kid's guru—I'm gonna be his *dai lo*. I'll take the kid for a drive, take him to a restaurant, order him the biggest lobster, the biggest steak. Eventually, I'll take him to the safe house where I keep kids and guns. Then I slowly break him in."

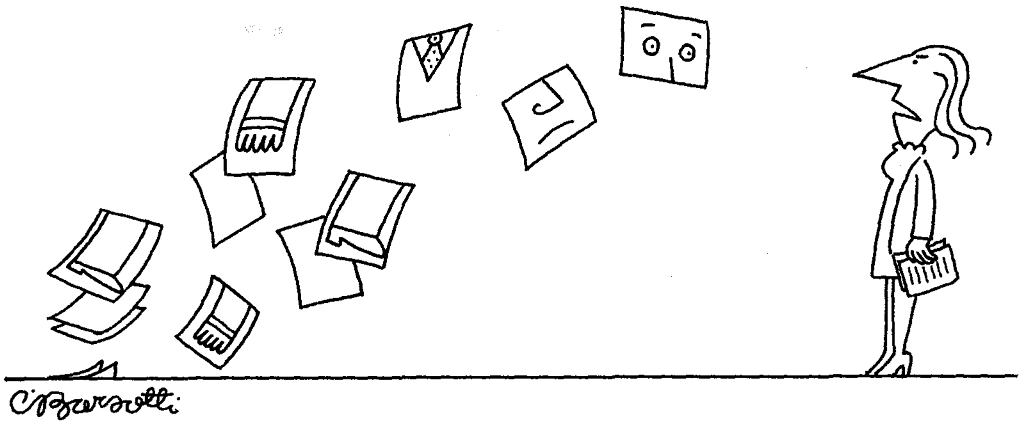
"Two months in France and Spain gave me the courage to smoke again."

PART of the allure of joining a gang is that it attracts a certain type of girl. Gang girls are not actual members, though they do sometimes hide guns or abet crimes in other ways. One girl involved with the Green Dragons, Tina Sham, was atypical. She was extremely shy and frightened by violence. Her grandfather was a prominent, upper-middle-class Hong Kong shipping executive, and a devout Buddhist. Her father, Robert, the ninth of ten children, was a rock musician. As a teen-ager, he heard the Beatles and discovered his destiny. By 1967, at the age of twenty, he had formed a Hong Kong rock group called Jade. Robert played drums. "We were very popular," he said recently. "We got four LP. I am quite famous." He smiled.

At twenty, Robert was already married; his wife, Rita, was half Chinese and half English. They had a daughter, Tina, in 1968; a son, Alfie, in 1969; and another son, Trini, in 1970. That year, they were divorced. Tina moved in with her cousins Beatrice and Dorothy Chan, the daughters of Robert's oldest sister.

In 1983, Robert relocated to Queens, taking Tina and Trini with him. (Alfie remained with his grandmother in Hong Kong.) He had long contemplated the move: "America, you have one big song, you win a fortune. When you hit"—he snapped his fingers—"that's *it!*" Rita had arrived in America a year earlier, remarried, and settled in Brooklyn. The Chan cousins moved to Queens soon after Robert did. Tina and Trini bounced from home to home, in Brooklyn and Queens. Robert's big plans did not seem to include child rearing.

The fame Robert had won so early in Hong Kong eluded him in America. By 1985, he was beginning to feel desperate. He now says he wanted to make enough money to build his own recording studio. At a night club, Robert met a heroin trafficker named Henry Chan. Henry needed another courier to smuggle his contraband from Hong Kong to New York, and he was willing to pay that person ten thousand dollars per pound. In May and June of 1985, Robert went to Hong Kong, loaded the false bottom of a steamer trunk with heroin, and mailed the trunk to himself with musical equipment inside. Both times, the trunk cleared customs undetected. At Christmas, Robert made a third trip for Henry, only this time he took the trunk on the plane. So far, Henry told him, that was twelve pounds of heroin—one hundred and twenty thousand dollars. Henry paid Robert in small bills, stuffed in restaurant take-out bags. On March 20, 1986, Robert arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport with his fourth shipment—eight pounds, this time, according to Henry. He was called aside by a customs agent. When Robert did too much talking, the agent got suspicious, examined the trunk, and discovered the false bottom. Robert was arrested. He decided to cover for Henry Chan, but then, to his shock, customs weighed the heroin at more than sixteen pounds—twice what Henry had told him. Realizing he had been cheated, Robert turned state's evidence against Henry. Thanks in large measure to his testimony, which filled nearly three days of a one-week trial in early 1988, Henry Chan was convicted. He got twelve years and was fined two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.



"Look, if it's just a matter of collating get one of the clerks to do it."

Robert, as a reward for coöperating, was sentenced to the two years he had already served while awaiting Henry's trial. He returned in disgrace to his apartment in Rego Park. He had brought dishonor to his family, and his grief was compounded by an incident that had occurred only four months after he was stopped at Kennedy Airport. It concerned his son Trini, who had had the misfortune to fall in with the Green Dragons.

Trini was prime Green Dragons material. At fifteen, he was already five-eleven, and tough. Officially, he lived with his mother, Rita, in Brooklyn, but he did not get along with his stepfather. The Green Dragons provided him with a floor mattress at a safe house on 128th Street in Queens. Soon he was given an assignment: to dispose of two guns used in a shooting—a .38-calibre pistol and a .357 magnum. At 4:30 A.M. on July 22, 1986, as Trini prepared to toss the weapons into Columbus Park, in Chinatown, he was stopped by a police officer—James Dora, of the Fifth Precinct. In a panic, Trini brandished the .38, which was loaded, fired, and hit Dora in the right hand and the neck. (Dora eventually recovered from his wounds, but not without considerable suffering.) Dora returned fire, wounding Trini. The boy dropped the guns and fled. For the next three days, he hid at the Queens gang apartment. On July 25th, police officers from the Fifth Precinct, acting on a tip, burst in and arrested him. On January 5, 1987, Trini pleaded guilty to attempted murder in the second degree, a Class B felony. He ended up serving five years as a juvenile offender.

For Tina Sham, seeing her father and brother go to prison as, respectively, a heroin smuggler and a would-be cop-killer was just the latest sad chapter in a difficult life. She had dropped out of school and tried to find work, but had few advantages, other than good looks. All her facial features were strong: large eyes set far apart, a shapely nose, a sensuous mouth. "She's too pretty," her cousin Beatrice Chan recalls thinking. "People will mess with her." Tina was a shy girl. "Tina never talked," Beatrice says. "She never even say one word back to you if you scold her. She just sit down and listen—sometimes she smile. And she never complain, whether she has enough money, food to eat, whether her rent could be paid."

Beatrice and her sister Dorothy had looked after Tina as a little girl in Hong Kong. At a house they shared in Woodside, and, later, in Elmhurst, they became, in effect, her foster family. Bea was married and had two small children; Dorothy was single; both worked at law offices in Chinatown.

"Tina don't really have a proper life," Beatrice remembers. "She's always with this relative, that relative. Relatives, if you don't have money to bring with you, they don't love you. You can't imagine how sad life she has. I get so mad with my Uncle Robert. Tina love her father very much, she want to stay with him, but the father don't know how to take care of her. He's a total lost person. He has a band in Hong Kong, very famous, and he come here and can't get fame. Then he goes into the wrong sides with doing the drugs, and got himself into a jail, and Tina got no place to stay, and jobs is hard to find. I have my own family, but still I try my very best. This is the only place she can stick around."

Tina seemed happy in the Chan household. "She loves my daughter Nicole, always she hugs her," Bea says. "She cooks for her. Tina even teach her how to eat French fries. And my son, Eugene, whenever his birthday, if her pocket has ten dollars, she buy the toys, she spend it all. She loves him."

Still, Tina could not seem to stay in one place. "She move around a *lot*," Bea says. "More than ten places. I help her move more than five places. I myself bring her food. And the apartment they live in is not good apartment."

One of Tina Sham's temporary addresses, an apartment on 164th Street and Parsons Boulevard, was a safe house for the Green Dragons. Tina lived there for a good part of 1986 with her boyfriend, a high-ranking Dragon named Johnny Tran, who was Vietnamese, which did not at all disqualify him for membership. Inside the gang, he was known by the nickname Johnny Walker.

Beatrice knew that Tina was dating a gang member but did not believe it was her place to object. "I'm very open, I take life easy," she says. "I know what they hang around with, I've been here since '83. Kids, you can't force them—they won't take anything from you. If I know my brother smoke, I don't object, but don't smoke it in the house."

She drew a similar line when it came to Johnny Walker. "He sometimes drive Tina to my old house in Woodside, but I don't let him park in front, because they usually come with a whole bunch of gang kids in the car. I tell him, 'Dump her a block away.' I don't want my neighbor to see gang kids—what do you think about us? But Johnny can come over. I even ask him to stay for dinner. That kid never wants to stay. He was around nineteen, and I know he was in the gang with the Green Dragons. But he's not that bad, he's very polite. These are just kids, you know?"

ON A SIDE STREET

If there are small shops
With blurred signs,
Don't come near them
Or look in their windows.

Keep to where the sky can be seen
In its cloudless twilight splendor
Above the dark buildings,
Dark even on darkest nights.
If someone's following you,
And he limps, and he's got a watch
He puts to his ear smiling,
Run from him and his watch.

There's a wide, well-lit avenue
Thereabouts. Thousands have come out
Just to see you, although
They make believe you're invisible
As you step into the light
Out of that dark side street,
With your face so pale
It seems powdered for a carnival.

—Charles Simic

The Golden Q, a pool hall on Queens Boulevard in Elmhurst, is a popular hangout for Chinese gangs. One day in October, 1986, Sonny Wong wandered in and met several members of the Green Dragons. Sonny Wong was sixteen. He worked at a Baskin-Robbins ice-cream parlor in Elmhurst and, a month earlier, had entered Newtown High School in the tenth grade. His English was not bad—he had come over from Hong Kong at age seven—but he was an indifferent student, with a truancy record.

Sonny's best friend at Newtown was a boy he had met in junior high, Steven Ng. At school, both boys were viewed as likely gang targets. They resisted joining the White Tigers and a Chinatown-based gang, the Tung On Boys, and were roughed up as a result. But when Sonny Wong encountered the Green Dragons at the pool hall, Steven Ng was among them.

Sonny had not seen Steven for a week, and Ng explained that his father had kicked him out of the house, and that he'd had nowhere to go, so he had moved into a Green Dragons apartment at Jamaica Avenue and Seventy-sixth Street. Johnny Walker, who was at the Golden Q that day with his girlfriend, Tina Sham, asked Sonny if he was living at home. Sonny said he was, and Johnny explained that if he, too, wanted to join the gang he would have to leave his parents and move into a safe house. Sonny looked around the poolroom at the Green Dragons and sized them up: they had fancy clothes, and money, and beepers, and did not go to school. They had cars. On the spot, he decided to become a member.

That was it. There were no initiation rites. It was considered proper to get a tattoo, though, and Sonny soon had three tattoos on his chest and arms—green dragons and an eagle. He began to dress like his gang brothers, in a black jacket, a black turtleneck, tight black jeans, and black canvas slippers, leaving his ankles bare, even in the dead of winter. Another gang affectation was to have one's hair permed, and streaked with red, yellow, or green dye; some members went every day to Linda's Beauty Salon, in Elmhurst.

The gang apartment at Jamaica and Seventy-sixth was on the top floor, with one private bedroom, belonging to the *dai lo*. He went by the name of E.T. Two other bedrooms were chockablock with floor mattresses, for five other gangsters, and Sonny would make six. Sonny got an allowance of forty dollars a week, and after Christmas the amount was doubled.

Gradually, Sonny came to understand that there was an even bigger boss than E.T. His name was Paul Wong, and he had founded the gang, a year earlier. Wong was considerably older than the other gang members; he was born on December 14, 1955, in China's Fukien Province—hence his nickname, Foochow Paul. He had a mustache (a Fukienese trait). Paul Wong had been a *dai lo* in the Fuk Ching gang, on East Broadway in Chinatown, which was affiliated with the Fukien American Association tong, and, thanks to his rank, he had become a millionaire in the heroin business. Except for one weapons bust, which had cost him a seven-hundred-and-fifty-dollar fine in 1984, he had stayed out of the clutches of the law. But because of the huge sums generated by drugs, and by another illegal business, the smuggling of aliens, the Fuk Ching was full of internal strife and killing, and Foochow Paul finally found it prudent to drop out and form a gang of his own.

He apparently chose the Elmhurst section of Queens because it was virgin territory; the White Tigers already had a strong foothold in Flushing. Foochow Paul had no interest in giving his gang kids entrée into the drug business, but he was beneficent, providing money for rent and cars and guns, and also high-priced criminal lawyers when they got arrested. A big man in Chinatown, he was, in effect, the Green Dragons' tong. It gave the Green Dragons "face" to say they were "Paul's kids," and the gang enhanced his status and provided him with bodyguards. Foochow Paul maintained residences in Hong Kong and on the mainland, but for the moment he was living in a private house in Forest Hills.

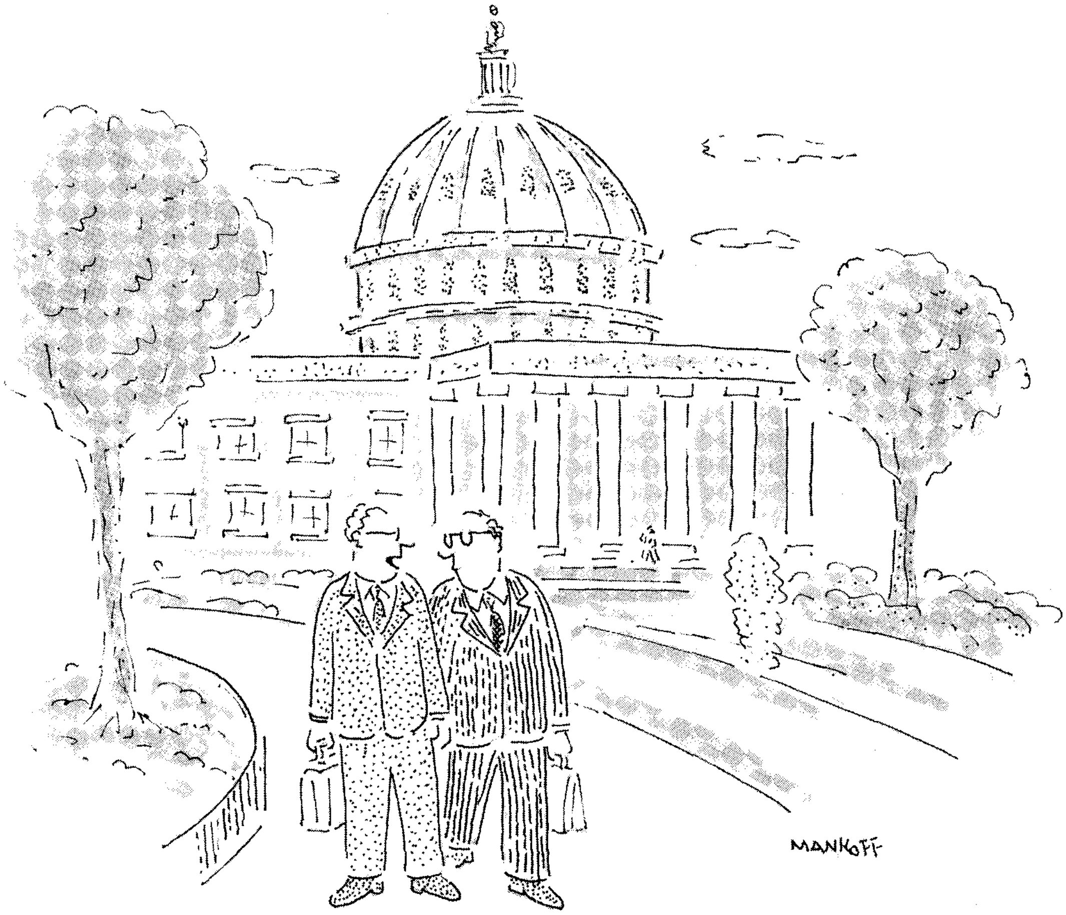
Sonny didn't get to meet the big boss right away. First, two seventeen-year-old flatmates broke him in. One of them was Chen I. Chung, and the other went by his nickname, Chicken Wing. As with all new members, I. Chung gave Sonny instructions on how to perform a "clean" kill. These were the essentials: shoot multiple times, to make sure the victim is dead; see that there are no witnesses; and, because murder weapons have to be discarded after a killing, always use the least expensive gun.

Chen I. Chung and Chicken Wing were considered brothers, as the result of a special ceremony, in which they cut their fingers and drank each other's blood. But privately Chicken had his doubts about I. Chung's leadership skills. "He looks dumbfounded sometimes," Chicken told Sonny. "It's not that he's not smart, the shit-face—he just doesn't bother to *think,* you know?" But Chen I. Chung was on an upwardly mobile track, because those more qualified to lead than he was would soon be dead or in jail.

On November 8, 1986, Chen I. Chung turned eighteen, and that evening his birthday was celebrated at the Foliage Restaurant, in Elmhurst. Everyone from the Jamaica Avenue and Parsons Boulevard apartments was present, including Tina Sham. About the only person absent was the boss, Foochow Paul himself. The Foliage was a large restaurant and bar, and the Dragons had rented the upper level in the back, which looked down on a dance floor. At some point in the evening, four Tung On Boys walked into the restaurant and sat down at a table on the lower level, directly below the party. The T.O.s proceeded to get drunk and twirl their guns on the table. At around two in the morning, E.T. got up to pay the manager for the party. He, too, was drunk, and I. Chung told Sonny Wong and Steven Ng to watch over him. They stood with E.T. by the cashier's table, but it was taking a long time for the manager to calculate the bill, so Sonny went off to get a soda. As he returned to the cashier, he saw E.T. arguing with one of the Tung Ons. Then E.T. smacked the Tung On in the face, and the T.O.s started shooting. Sonny ducked behind the bar. When he got up, E.T. and another Green Dragon were dead, and Steven Ng had been shot eight times in the chest. (Ng survived and returned to the gang, but never chose to get a tattoo, perhaps reasoning that eight bullet holes were adequate.)

On New Year's Day, 1987, Sonny Wong got an urgent phone call from a friend named Cindy Pak. She said she was being harassed by two Fuk Ching boys at a roller rink on Roosevelt Avenue in Jackson Heights. Sonny went to the rink to investigate, identified himself as a Green Dragon to the two boys, William Mei and Jinbo Zhao, and asked why they were bothering his friend. The boys told Sonny to back off—it was just a misunderstanding. Sonny left the rink and returned with six Green Dragons, in three cars. The Dragons escorted the two Fuk Ching boys out the door, and Johnny Walker threw them against a wall and began punching them in the face. Then they were forced into the Dragons' blue Pontiac, and driven off.

They were brought to the Parsons Boulevard apartment, where Tina Sham was living with Johnny Walker. She was in the bedroom, getting dressed, when the captives were hustled in. Tina looked through the narrow slats in the bedroom



"But how do you know for sure you've got power unless you abuse it?"

door, and saw the two boys on the floor, being interrogated and struck by one of the Green Dragons. Sonny was punching them as well, saying, "You wanted to hit me before. Why don't you hit me now?" Then Johnny Walker entered the bedroom and led Tina and another gang girlfriend out of the apartment. Frightened, Tina walked quickly to the front door with her head down, but looked up long enough to recognize several of the Green Dragons.

After the two girls left with Johnny, the Fuk Ching boys were strung up by their fingers against the living-room wall. For two hours, they were interrogated. Then Sonny was told to get take-out from downstairs. He returned with the food, and, with the gang's permission, untied the Fuk Ching boys and gave them some mushrooms and rice. Sonny later claimed that he left the apartment soon afterward, and never again saw William Mei and Jinbo Zhao. Three months later, their badly decomposed bodies were found floating in a marsh off the Saw Mill River Parkway in Westchester County, in the village of Ardsley. Each had been shot once in the head.

A FEW days after the roller-rink incident, on Chinese New Year, Sonny Wong at last got to meet Foochow Paul. The boss dropped by the Parsons Boulevard apartment, handed out around two hundred dollars to each of the gang members, wished them Happy New Year, and left. A week or so later, Sonny met Paul Wong again, at the Silver Pond Restaurant in Flushing, at a dinner to introduce the boss to some of the newer members. Paul asked Sonny his name and where he was from. They seemed to hit it off, which pleased Sonny tremendously.

Lately, Sonny had had reason to fear that he was losing the respect of his gang brothers. They had made fun of him for ducking behind the bar during the shootout at the Foliage Restaurant, and for giving food to the Fuk Ching boys. On February 13th, Sonny was offered an opportunity to prove his manhood: he was selected, with three others, to murder a *dai lo* in the Tung On gang in retaliation for the death of E.T. The youngest member of the shooting party, Billy Kim, was fourteen. Chen I. Chung kept a statue of the warrior god Gung Gong by the door, and he asked the four boys to pray before heading out. So they knelt down and burned three sticks of incense to Gung Gong, and then went off to kill the Tung On boss.

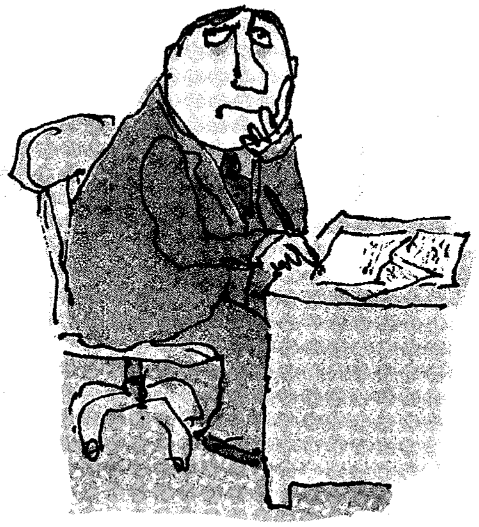
Johnny Walker drove the four boys to the Taiwan Center in Flushing, a meeting place for Cantonese people, where the Tung Ons had been partying earlier that evening. When the Green Dragons arrived, the party was over and the Taiwan Center was closed. So Johnny suggested that they try the 888 Restaurant in Jackson Heights, a popular T.O. hangout. Johnny parked the car in front, and the four Green Dragons went inside. There were T.O.s in the restaurant, all right, but far more than the Dragons had bargained for—maybe thirty of them, at four tables in the back, including a few that Sonny recognized as his tormentors at Newtown High School. Sonny and his gang brothers took seats up front and weighed their options. They agreed they could not back out. Sonny, armed with a .357, and Billy, carrying a .38, would hit the boss, and the two other boys would stand guard up front to cover them if the Tung Ons gave chase. The main dining room at the 888 was elevated, so Sonny and Billy were gazing down at the T.O. boss, at a distance of about forty feet, when they opened fire. Each got off six rounds, then fled, uncertain of who, if anyone, had been hit. (Five people were wounded, none seriously.) Johnny Walker sped off with the four Dragons and returned them to the safe house.

Though the mission was not a success, Chen I. Chung was satisfied that at least the Tung Ons had been put on warning. In any case, Sonny Wong's status rose dramatically after the shooting, because Foochow Paul took him under his wing. During the next three months, Sonny was Paul's personal bodyguard, at the boss's house in Forest Hills and on two trips to Hong Kong. Sonny also smuggled one hundred thousand dollars of Paul's drug profits through Hong Kong customs.

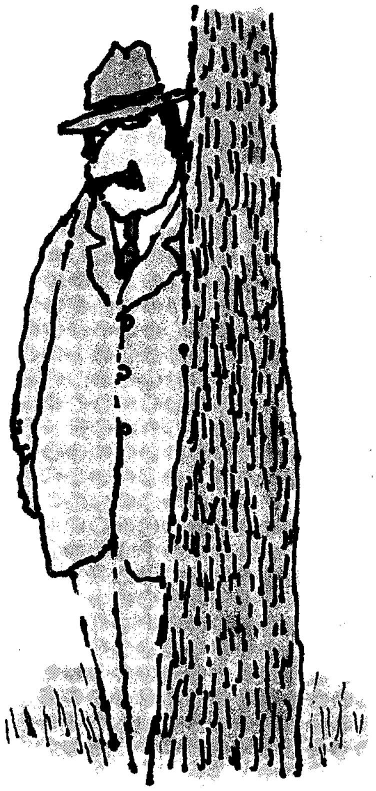
Meanwhile, Paul conceived of another role for Sonny. Because he spoke good English, Sonny would be the liaison between him and the attorney who appeared to be the Green Dragons' house counsel. That man was Arthur Mass, a criminal lawyer who defended a lot of drug dealers and mafiosi. (Mass

NAGGING QUESTIONS

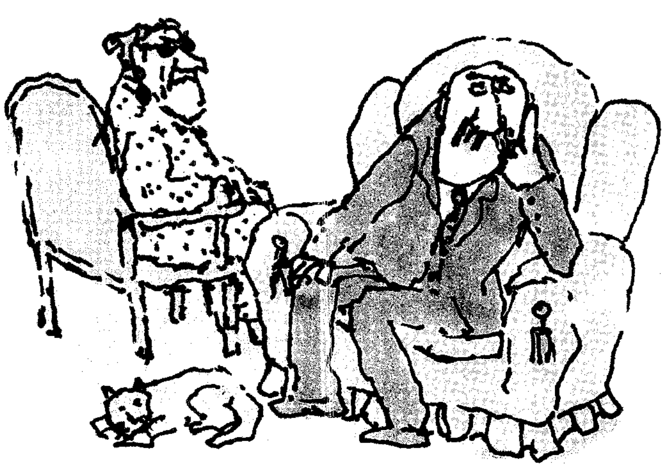
by William Steig



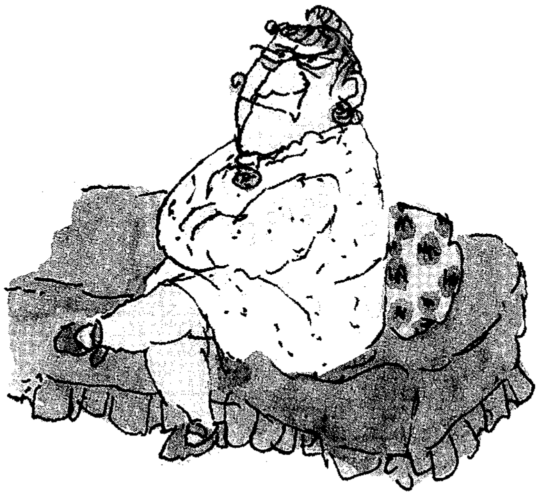
"How should I say it?"



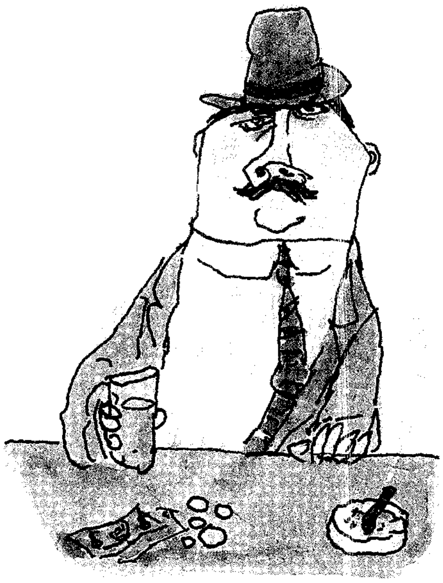
"Should I kill him now?"



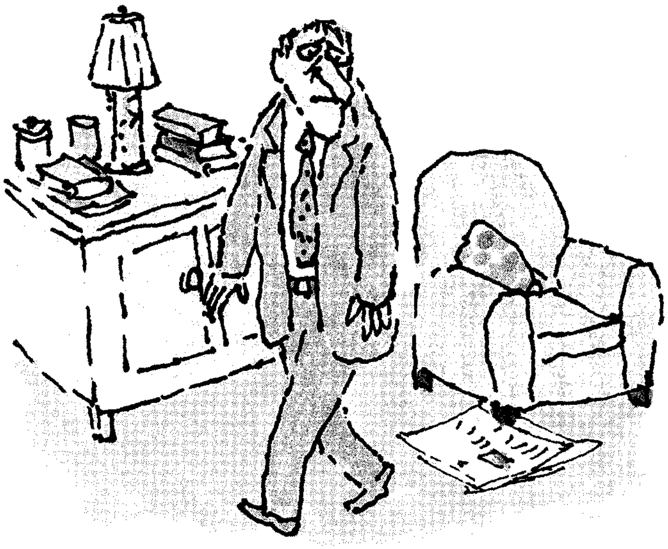
"What did I ever see in her?"



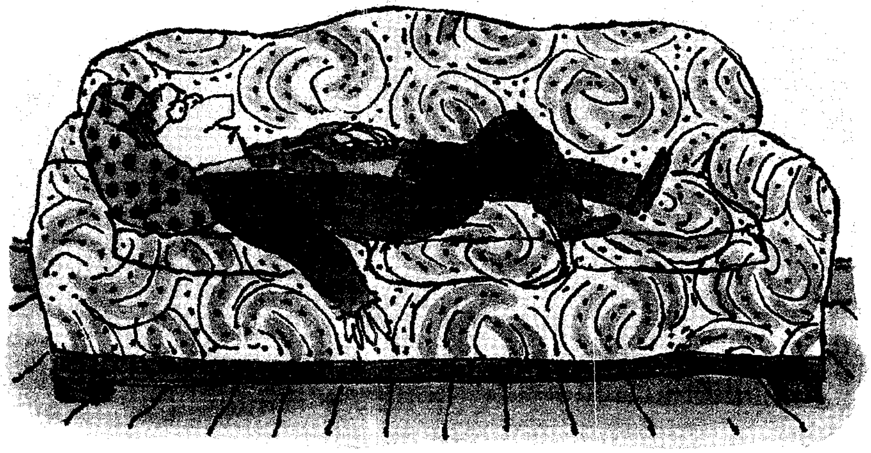
"Just whom did she mean when she said, 'There are some people who . . .'?"



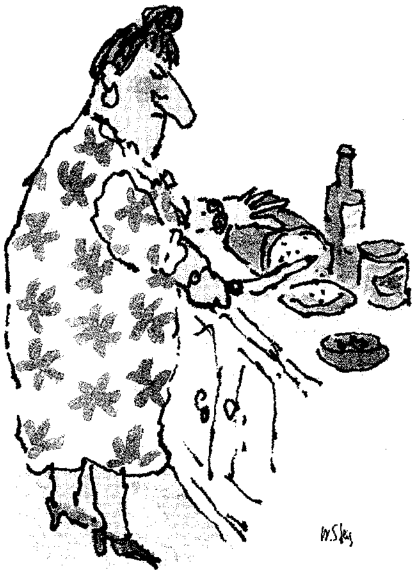
"Why do I take so much of his crap?"



"Where the devil did I put my glasses?"



"Am I as stupid as I feel I am?"



"Why did I marry such a jackass?"

vehemently denies that he was the gang's house counsel: "All I am is a defense lawyer who works for anybody who's busted, and because I'm good at my job the Green Dragons called me. That doesn't mean I work for the Green Dragons. I work for individuals.") In April of 1987, according to trial testimony, Paul Wong introduced Sonny to Arthur Mass at a Japanese restaurant in Manhattan. The three of them met once a week after that, at the same restaurant; sometimes Mass brought his girlfriend.

Mass's services were soon needed, for on June 27th, while Sonny and two other Green Dragons were driving on Queens Boulevard, their car was stopped by the police. They were told to get out and lie on the ground. The gang members were then handcuffed and driven to a police station in Westchester. Sonny was separated from the others, taken to an interview room, read his rights, and shown photographs of William Mei and Jinbo Zhao, the Fuk Ching boys who had been abducted from the roller rink and murdered. As Detective Thomas Dixon later told it, Sonny began to cry, and then said, "I didn't kill them both." A Green Dragon named Hock Jai had murdered Zhao, he said. Sonny never signed a statement, and his gang brothers refused to believe that he had cracked, which was fortunate. Coöperating with police was a violation of gang rules, punishable by death.

TINA SHAM was terrified. She was only nineteen, both her father and her brother were in jail, and now she was being threatened with arrest as an accessory to murder. On the day Sonny was arrested, Tina was hanging out with Johnny Walker in a safe-house apartment in Brooklyn. The police burst in and led Johnny out, then escorted her into the hallway for questioning. When she refused to speak, she was handcuffed, taken to police headquarters in Westchester, and interrogated for two or three hours by a detective. Finally, Tina described all she had seen and heard through the bedroom-door slats on New Year's Day, and whom she recognized as she was leaving the apartment. Two days later, she was held at a Westchester motel as a material witness.

In Westchester County, before a secret grand jury is convened defendants may request a so-called felony hearing, which is held in open court. A judge determines whether there is enough evidence to warrant sending the case to a grand jury. The felony hearing in the case of People of the State of New York v. Siu Man (Sonny) Wong et al. began on July 2, 1987, before a local judge at a small courthouse in the village of Ardsley, where the bodies of the Fuk Ching boys had been found. Each of the nine defendants was represented by an experienced New York criminal-defense lawyer; Hock Jai's attorney was Arthur Mass. Bruce Bendish, the Westchester assistant D.A. prosecuting the case, was impressed. "It was obvious to me that money was not an issue," he said recently.

On the first day of the hearing, which lasted two days, Bendish called to the stand his most important witness, Tina Sham. She was led in before the eyes of the defendants, including her boyfriend, Johnny Walker. As Bendish took Tina's testimony, her voice was barely audible, because her head was down. Judge Walter Schwartz remarked that he was within five feet of her and had to lean forward to hear. "I remember her," Pat Basini, the Ardsley Village court clerk, says. "Pretty little thing. She was so scared—never raised her eyes." Nevertheless, Bendish managed to elicit from Tina that the Fuk Ching boys had been beaten in the Green Dragons' apartment, and the names of those who had participated.

At the conclusion of the hearing, on July 3rd, Judge Schwartz ruled that there was indeed enough evidence to hold the defendants without bail pending a grand-jury investigation. Before that could occur, Bruce Bendish left the Westchester D.A.'s office, and his successor inherited the case. He did not inherit the star witness. Tina Sham, convinced that her life was in grave danger, disappeared. The grand jury failed to indict four of the defendants, including Chen I. Chung, who was released from the Westchester County Jail after about fifty days. Billy Kim pleaded guilty, apparently to take the heat off his gang brothers; because he was fourteen when the homicides took place, he could not be sentenced as an adult. After two years in prison awaiting trial, Sonny Wong was found not guilty; apparently, the jury, like the gang, did not believe he had confessed. The Westchester D.A.'s office plea-bargained relatively short jail terms on lesser charges for Johnny Walker, Chicken Wing, and Hock Jai.

The D.A. never had a chance to serve Tina Sham with a grand-jury subpoena. Within days after the felony hearing, she had been hustled off to San Francisco with her cousin Dorothy Chan. The two remained there for four months.

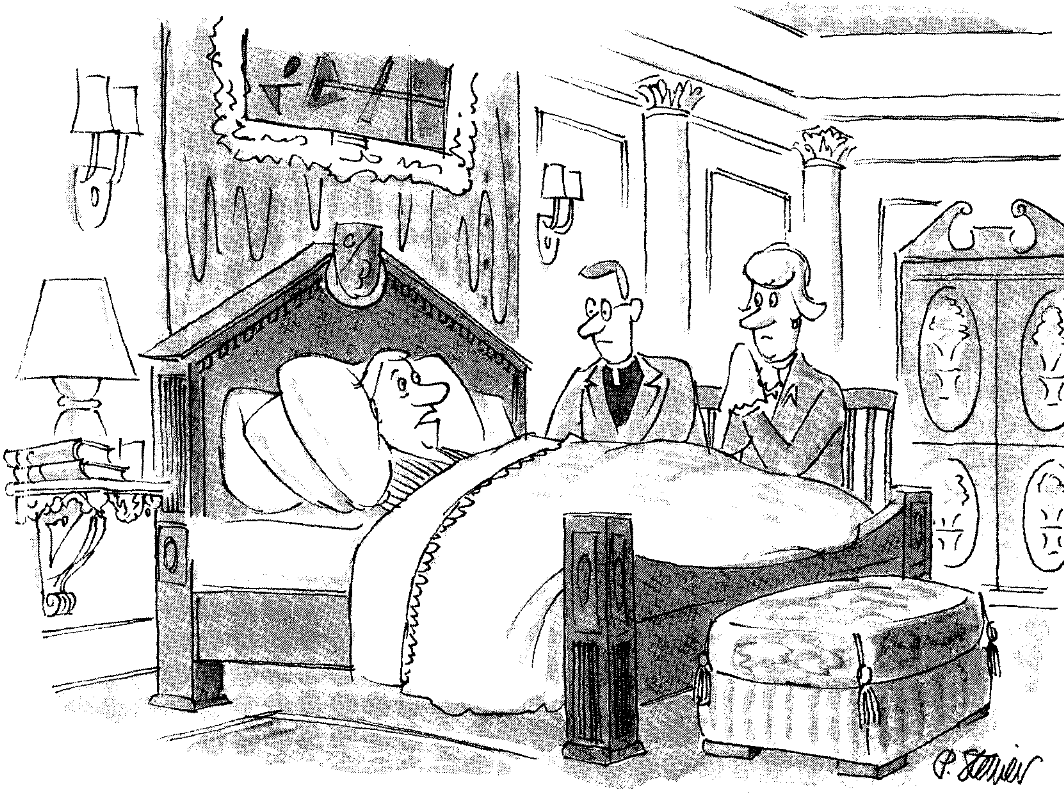
"After they come back from San Francisco, I put them in an apartment in Woodside near my house," Tina's cousin Beatrice Chan recalls. "I tell Tina to stay with Dorothy. Don't go out anywhere, come up to my house for lunch. After six months, we thought it was safe for her. We said, 'Maybe it's time to find a part-time job around here—don't go to Chinatown.' So she applied for a job at the Key Food on Queens Boulevard. The wages is not good, but she works there. She goes to movies in Queens and midtown, but not Chinatown. So after a year two detectives go to Key Food. They know where she is. They tell me, it's all right now. The case is finished."

CHEN I. CHUNG, unfortunately, held grudges. By mid-1989, with the Westchester case over, he was now the *dai lo*, answerable to no one but Foochow Paul himself. It was time to avenge an insult to the gang even more grievous than the one committed by Tina Sham.

A year and a half earlier, on January 3, 1988, the gang's shakedown tactics had met with unprecedented resistance. That afternoon, four Green Dragons—Chen I. Chung, Lung Gor, Danny Ngo, and Allen Wong—had lunch at the Broadway Noodle Shop, a restaurant in Elmhurst that had just opened. Sometime between two-thirty and three, they finished eating and got up to leave. The owner, a burly Taiwanese named Peter Chung, confronted them and demanded, "Why don't you pay?" Danny Ngo flung a lighted cigarette at him, and suddenly everyone was shouting. An employee came out of the kitchen with a gun and opened fire. Ngo was wounded slightly in the arm. Lung Gor was shot dead.

Now Chen I. Chung had just the hit

man in mind to settle the score—a Vietnamese, recently arrived from San Francisco. His name was Tony Tran, but he was more commonly known as Dai Bay, or Big Nose. On the evening of May 2, 1989, I. Chung sent Big Nose to the Broadway Noodle with orders to kill the owner. He carried two guns, a .38 and a 9-mm. semi-automatic. The job was a cinch; Big Nose didn't even have to go inside. Peter Chung was standing by the front entrance, so Big Nose just walked up and shot him three times at close range. The gunshots shattered the restaurant's glass door. Leaving a trail of bloody footprints back into the restaurant, Chung collapsed into a chair, fatally wounded. The day after the shooting, Chen I. Chung appeared at one of the gang apartments with a copy of a Chinese newspaper carrying the story, and handed it over. The gesture was well understood: it was I. Chung's way of saying that whoever did it would get recognition. He made only one comment, "*Bo ying*"—a Cantonese expression meaning "What goes around comes around."



"I want to be cremated and have my ashes sprinkled on the Republican Party."

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ONE day in June, 1989, as Foochow Paul walked out the door of a private house in Flushing, two or three young Asians hiding behind the bushes on his front lawn jumped out and opened fire. Paul was hit four times. He managed to get himself to Booth Memorial Medical Center. The Green Dragons' beepers began sounding, and word of the shooting spread rapidly throughout the gang. Several members caucused at the hospital, including Sonny Wong, just recently out of jail and now Chen I. Chung's underboss. The next day, Paul Wong came out of surgery, and I. Chung smuggled two handguns into his room, in the hollowed-out core of a Yellow Pages. On the pretext of being relatives, gang members remained in Paul's room around the clock, to make sure no one took another shot at him.

In a few days, Paul Wong recovered sufficiently from his wounds to be released from the hospital. He had an apartment at Broadway and Fifty-seventh Street, in Manhattan, and gang members took him there to recuperate. Paul said that when he was well enough to walk he would leave the country, and then he wanted the Green Dragons to avenge his shooting. Not many people knew the address of the house in Flushing, apart from Wong's partners in the drug business, and Paul's suspicions centered on one of them—Kin Tai Chan, better known as Ah Tai. Paul told the Dragons that if Ah Tai had formed an association with a fraternal society known as the Taiwanese Brothers it would be proof of his treachery. By early August, Paul was back on his feet and was in China. One afternoon, Chen I. Chung spotted Ah Tai leaving a condominium in Flushing with members of the Taiwanese Brothers. That evening, by telephone, Paul Wong ordered his death.

On the night of August 23rd, two Dragons in a gold Honda Accord spotted Ah Tai's girlfriend, and followed her to a house on the corner of Pershing Crescent and Eighty-fourth Drive, in Jamaica. Sometime after 10 P.M., Ah Tai left the house toting a shoulder bag full of laundry and strolled down the driveway. As he opened the door to his car, a white Jeep Cherokee, a member of the Green Dragons—it was later alleged to be Steven Ng—jumped out of the Honda and shot him once in the head and three times in the back with a .380 semi-automatic. Another bullet tore a gold Rolex off Ah Tai's left wrist; it landed near a sewer. Police searching Ah Tai's dead body ruled out robbery as a motive; he had on his person over eighteen hundred dollars in cash. It was alleged that while firing the fatal shots Steven Ng told him, "This is from Paul."

ALTHOUGH Paul Wong was nearly twice the average age of his gang kids, there was no evidence that he ever acted as a restraining influence. But his money did. Wong helped the gang defray its largest expenses—lawyers' fees, bail, firearms, rent—reducing the need for armed robbery. Once he left Queens for China, in August, 1989, that source of funds for the gang dried up. Chen I. Chung continued to take direction from him over the telephone, but now the young *dai lo* was in charge. And the Green Dragons were out of control.

By the winter of 1989-90, Chen I. Chung was having difficulty meeting expenses, even though he had stepped up the pace of extortions. From an operations standpoint, the Green Dragons were in the red. Finally, I. Chung asked a cousin of his named Allen Lin, who was not in the gang, to scout out sites for armed robberies. Lin heard of a private apartment in Elmhurst where medium-stakes mah-jongg games were held. He went there one night and found two game tables, at which perhaps one or two thousand dollars changed hands. A middle-aged couple was in charge of the action, and the wife served soft drinks.

The apartment was occupied by a Taiwanese man, who will be referred to here as Charlie Lo, and his wife, his mother, and the wife's cousin. Lo was twenty-seven and worked in a restaurant from ten in the morning until ten at night. His wife, Susan, put in similar hours at a different restaurant. She was twenty-four and was born in Malaysia. On January 23, 1990, Susan Lo returned home at about eleven and found her mother-in-law and her cousin on the living-room sofa watching television. It had been a long, hard day, and Susan changed into a robe and prepared to take a hot bath.

Charlie Lo, arriving home a few minutes later, encountered a young man in a black jacket loitering in the lobby. He was a Green Dragon named Jay Cheng. As Lo climbed five steps to the door of his apartment, another youth passed him, on the way down. At his door, Charlie looked around nervously, then turned his key in one of two locks. The second lock jammed, and as he struggled with it five Green Dragons surrounded him and pulled him over to the mailboxes facing the door. Four of them had guns, and the fifth brandished what the gang called its Rambo knife.

"Open the door. Please don't fuss," Lo recalls being told. He protested that the lock was broken, and offered the key. Again, he was ordered to open the door, and this time he succeeded. The gang members rushed in together, pushing Lo to the ground. After several minutes, he was taken into a bedroom and forced to strip to his underwear. Jay Cheng found a bank card in Charlie's wallet and demanded the code number. With two guns pressed into his back, Charlie gave it to him. "Is the number real or not?" Jay demanded. "It's real," Charlie said. "If you don't believe me, you can go and try it." Jay told him that if the number didn't work, or if he reported the robbery to the police, his entire family would be killed.

Susan Lo had finished taking her bath when she heard noises that sounded like furniture being moved. She opened the bathroom door a crack, saw a black-jacketed man with a small gun, and heard someone say, in Cantonese, "Where is your money?" She tried to climb out the bathroom window, but it was too small. For half an hour, she huddled in a corner, hoping not to be discovered. Then Brian Chan, an eighteen-year-old Green Dragon, kicked the door open. From the adjoining room, Charlie Lo could hear his wife screaming.

Pressing a small black gun against her shoulder, Brian Chan led Susan into her bedroom. Her husband, her mother-in-law, and her cousin were lying face down there, in their underwear. The room had been ransacked. One of the robbers was rummaging through a desk beside a large fish tank. Jay asked Susan where she had hidden the money. "There is no money," she said. If he found even one dollar in her room, Jay told Susan, he would kill her. She was made to take off her robe and lie face down next to her husband. The robbers tore through a closet and turned the bed upside down. After perhaps half an hour, Susan Lo and her cousin were led into the cousin's bedroom and raped.

MAILBOX

To the Editor:

Philip Levine's poem "On the Meeting of García Lorca and Hart Crane" (October 19th) fascinated me because García Lorca and I were friends during our student days at the Residencia in Madrid in 1920-21. I have a photo of us standing on the rear platform of a third-class coach after a day in Toledo spent examining El Grecos and discussing world problems and wine. I remember the depressed atmosphere of 1929, when the two poets met in Brooklyn, which produced the falling visions that Levine writes about.

HENRY C. RICKARD
Westwood, Mass.

By 1:15 A.M., the apartment was quiet. Charlie found his wife, naked and sobbing, under a blanket. In a little while, Susan got up and made a tour of the apartment. The sofa had been overturned. Videotapes were scattered on the floor. All the cabinet drawers were pulled out, and clothes and shoes were tossed in heaps. A table had been kicked over, and mah-jongg tiles were strewn about. All the telephone lines were slashed. Susan got dressed and called the police from a corner pay phone.

Back at one of the gang's apartments, the proceeds of the robbery—cash, jewelry, and pearls—were poured out on a coffee table. Chen I. Chung counted the money and gave most of it to Sonny Wong to be used for lawyers' fees. The rest was divided up. Jay Cheng went to a cash machine and tried Charlie Lo's bank card. He got five hundred dollars.

In 1989, Tina Sham turned twenty-one. She had not seen any of the Green Dragons for two years. Johnny Walker was still in jail. Tina had felt sufficiently safe from harm to commit another offense against the Dragons: she dated a boy nicknamed Mosquito Steve, who happened to be a member of the White Tigers. Meanwhile, she got a job as a cashier at a Chinatown beauty parlor. Around Christmas, she was formally introduced to a young man whose best friend's sister knew her cousin Dorothy. The young man wanted to date her, but Tina was not sure what she thought of him. He was different from the guys she was used to going out with—a hardworking ethnic Chinese from Vietnam who made his living repairing jet airplanes. His name was Tommy Mach.

Tommy's father had been a prosperous pork distributor in Saigon, but after the Communists took over he escaped with his wife and seven children, on October 2, 1977, in a small, crowded boat. The Machs almost died of thirst during the five days it took the boat to reach the Philippines. After the family had spent ten months in a refugee camp in Manila, the United States Catholic Conference sponsored their passage to New York, first boarding them at an old hotel near Lincoln Center, and then renting a small apartment for them in Elmhurst. Tommy's father was very strict, and the entire Mach family was suffused with the Asian work ethic. The Mach children spent up to eight hours a night trying to do their homework in an unfamiliar language.

"Those were the days, my friend, We thought they'd never end."

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In 1981, Mr. Mach decided he could make a better living elsewhere, and moved out of the city with his wife and two youngest children, who were girls. The five oldest children, down to Tommy, now fourteen, remained at the apartment in Elmhurst. Mrs. Mach was worried that, with no parent around, her youngest son might fall in with a gang. In fact, Tommy was himself so fearful of gang kids that in junior high he avoided making friends with any Chinese at all. "Tom said, 'Mom, we've gone through a lot of difficulty to get to this country, and I'm not going to waste my life and be an idiot,' " his older brother Steven recalls. "I was very proud of him."

Far from wasting his life, Tommy had rapidly become proficient in English. He passed an entrance exam for Aviation High School, one of the best in New York City, and breezed through with good grades. After he graduated, he obtained F.A.A. certification to work on all aspects of aviation maintenance. He accepted a job at Butler Aviation. At the age of seventeen, not yet old enough to drive, Tommy Mach was repairing jet planes.

By 1986, it seemed that the long struggle was over for the Mach family, and that, as Steven put it, "God couldn't treat us better." The older children had graduated from college and gone into finance and other high-paying professions. Steven became a software engineer. The Machs bought their first home, in the suburbs. Steven lived there with his parents, and so, for a while, did Tommy, who happily contributed toward the mortgage.

In September of 1989, Tommy, bored with suburban life, decided that the time had come to move back to Queens. He took a job with USAir at LaGuardia Airport. At twenty-two, he was earning over fifty thousand a year. One weekend, Tommy came up to see his brother with news of a romantic interest.

Steven recalls, "He said, 'I met this girl and she looks really cute and all that, but I just don't know if she like me or not.' That girl is Tina. I said, 'Don't worry, just let it go easy, let it go natural. If she's yours, she's yours.' And then nothing work out, because he said that Tina, for some reason, is kind of hold back. I said, 'Did you talk to her?' 'Yeah, I talk to her a couple of times; she doesn't seem to show any interest.' I said, 'Hey, what's the big deal? If she doesn't respond, there's a lot of other girls out there. Maybe she's trying to play hard to get.' "

By February of 1990, Tommy had been back in Queens for six months, and city life was beginning to wear on him. His mother was begging him to return home. Finally, Tommy confided to a friend that he planned to ask Tina Sham out one last time, on Valentine's Day, and if she refused him he was going to pack up and move back in with his parents and Steven. Whether the threat was genuine will never be known, because Tina accepted.

After Valentine's Day, Tommy was a constant presence in the Chan household in Elmhurst. Some nights, he would pick up Tina in his car, a red Subaru, and take her dancing at a Manhattan club, the Limelight. Other nights, he would stay over for dinner and play mah-jongg with family members. "He's very sporty," Beatrice Chan recalls. "He never can sit still. But Tommy, he's not a bad kid, he earns his own way. I tell Tina he's quite good. I said, 'Go disco.' "

Within days of their first big date, Tommy was talking openly of marriage and children. Tina was clearly fond of him, but at the same time she seemed deeply troubled, and it now appears that she had not yet found the nerve to tell Tommy about her past. Or perhaps she was worried about Johnny Walker, who would soon be getting out of prison and might still view her as his girlfriend. "Tina, she sits here sometimes by herself watching TV, but she's not watching TV," Beatrice recalls. "She's somewhere else. Maybe she don't want us to worry, but she don't tell us anything."

ON Friday, February 23, 1990, Tommy Mach had the day off. He planned to take Tina and Beatrice for dim sum, but Beatrice bowed out at the last minute, because her husband was returning from a trip that day. Around three o'clock, Tommy arrived with Tina at the Crown Palace Restaurant, on the corner of Queens Boulevard and Van Loon. Tina was wearing jeans, cowboy boots, a sweater, a black silk blouse, and hoop earrings. Tommy was dressed in a white shirt with black polka dots, jeans, and a black leather jacket. Tina had been to the Crown Palace a few times before, and one of the waiters recognized her. Even more familiar to him were the Green Dragons who just then filed in, taking their usual table, by the back door. The gang collected two hundred and fifty dollars in extortion money every Sunday from the Crown Palace, and had dim sum at the restaurant two or three times a week.

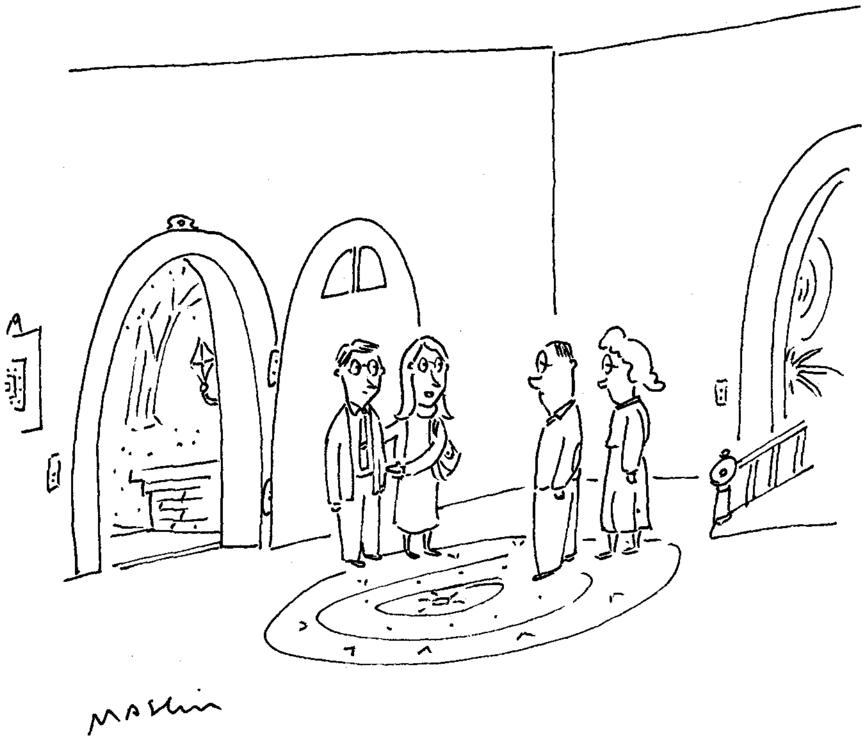
Chen I. Chung, as befitted his rank as *dai lo*, took the corner position at the table. Big Nose sat next to him. There were some new faces in the gang. Aleck Yim was that rarity—an American-born Chinese gang member; he was seventeen, and had been recruited out of Forest Hills High School. Yim was called Moon Jian, which means Small Eyes.

Brian Chan was also at the table. One month earlier, he had found Susan Lo cowering in her bathroom and marched her out at gunpoint. Brian was born in Hong Kong in 1972 and baptized Roman Catholic. Ten years later, he had immigrated to America with his family, and was enrolled at St. Patrick's Semi-Military Academy, in Harriman, New York. He wore a full-dress uniform, maintained an A-minus average, and graduated in 1986. Brian spoke a number of Chinese dialects and fluent English. In the winter of 1986, Brian's father died. Both Brian and his older brother, Perry, dropped out of high school. By the summer of 1988, the two boys were in the care of an uncle: their mother had evidently abandoned them. Along the way, the brothers suffered another trauma: they were beaten by Chinese teen-agers, and Brian was stabbed. Close together in age, Perry and Brian moved in opposite directions. Perry obtained a high-school-equivalency diploma, worked his way up to contract administrator at a Manhattan financial company, and began studying for an M.B.A. By late 1989, Brian had joined the Green Dragons.

Roger Kwok was another relative newcomer to the gang. He was born to Chinese parents in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the third of four children. In 1979, when Roger was six, he and his family were forced by the Khmer Rouge to walk two hundred miles to a detention camp in Thailand. From there, the Kwoks moved to New Jersey. Roger's father was a stonecutter, and his mother found a job at General Motors. Roger was a good student, but began running away from home at age fifteen and hanging out with the Green Dragons. Desperate to keep his youngest son from becoming a gangster, Mr. Kwok shipped Roger to California to live with his grandparents and attend a parochial school. This arrangement lasted one month. In August, 1989, Mr. Kwok tried another tack: he moved his entire family to Middletown, in upstate New York. Roger dropped out of Middletown High in January, 1990, and now, a month later, sat at a table with his gang brothers. After all the gang members had taken their places, the manager signalled for the waitress to serve them. They began to eat.

Sonny Wong arrived late. When he took his place at the table, Chen I. Chung gestured across the restaurant, toward the right-hand side. Is that Tina? Sonny believed it was. The boy was unfamiliar, but he had a black jacket and looked like a gang member; he must be the White Tiger that Tina supposedly went out with. I. Chung sent three Green Dragons to the table to verify the girl's identity and frisk the boy. They came back and reported that the girl was most definitely Tina Sham but the boy had neither a gun nor a tattoo. I. Chung asked Sonny what he should do. "You're the boss," Sonny reminded him. Throughout the summer of 1989, I. Chung had repeatedly insisted that Tina Sham must be killed for testifying in the Westchester case and for dating a White Tiger. "She's been around long enough to know the rules," he had said then, more than once. Now I. Chung had to make a decision quickly, because, unnerved, Tina and the boy were hastily paying their bill and preparing to leave. The back table fell silent, except for intense whispering between Chen I. Chung and Big Nose. All eyes were on the *dai lo*. As Tina and Tommy were walking out, I. Chung made a gesture with the back of his hand. The gang understood.

Someone tapped Aleck Yim on the shoulder, and he got up. He and Big Nose left through a side door, and Brian Chan and Roger Kwok went out the front. Tommy and Tina had reached the door of his red Subaru, in the parking lot across the street from the restaurant.



"Mom, Dad, this is Phil, the man I've been running a background check on."

“Thank you, sir. I see you’re not hopelessly liberal.”

• •

Suddenly, they were surrounded by four Green Dragons with their guns drawn. “What do you want?” both of them asked. Aleck took Tina’s bag. Big Nose swung around in the gang’s car, a two-tone blue Mercury. Tommy and Tina were forced into the car, and it drove off. Big Nose was in the driver’s seat, and Aleck was beside him, aiming at the captives. Tina and Tommy, in the back, were squeezed between Brian and Roger, who were also pointing guns at them.

En route, Big Nose explained to the other gang members what I. Chung had told him: this was for revenge. None of the four abductors had ever met Tina Sham, but they had heard about her. The boy was a mystery—apparently not a gang member. That was simply too bad—the killing must be clean, no witnesses. The restaurant staff, they were certain, would be too frightened ever to testify. Big Nose told Aleck that they had to find a quiet place with no one around, and asked for directions, because he was from San Francisco and was unfamiliar with the area. By now, they were on the Long Island Expressway. Tina was crying and begging; Tommy was very quiet. Meanwhile, Brian, Roger, and Aleck took their belongings. Tina, who was both Catholic and Buddhist, handed over her silver cross and a gold chain and a gold-plated Buddha inscribed “Chinese Happiness.” Tommy surrendered a stainless-steel Charles Jourdan watch, a gift from his brother Steven, and a jade Buddha that Steven had brought him from Thailand after having a monk bless it to keep Tommy safe from harm.

The drive went on for more than forty-five minutes, and finally Big Nose left the L.I.E. and turned down a residential street. There were too many houses. They circled around for a while and came across a dirt road. The road ran along the bottom of a ravine and cut through dense woods—an ideal spot for an execution. Big Nose remained by the car, telling Aleck to make sure they went all the way down the path, and to bind the hands of both the boy and the girl. And he added, “Let the new kid do it.”

Aleck understood. Brian Chan had an expensive automatic; Roger Kwok, the new kid, sixteen years old, was carrying a less expensive .38. The three abductors forced Tina and Tommy down into the ravine, which was slippery with dead leaves, and onto the road. They walked for about two hundred and fifty feet, and then, though Tony had told them to go farther, Aleck stopped, because he was scared. Roger got Tina to kneel, pulled back her sweater, and knotted it behind her; Aleck pushed Tommy to his knees and performed a similar maneuver with Tommy’s leather jacket. Then Aleck gave the signal: ready, go. Roger killed Tommy first, with one shot to the back of the head, and then Tina. They both slumped forward from the impact and landed together on their right sides. As they lay there, probably already dead, Aleck took his gun and pumped bullets into Tommy’s left armpit and abdomen and Tina’s left abdomen and hip. Then the three boys ran.

Big Nose asked Aleck why he had fired his gun. Aleck said nothing, but then Big Nose reassured him: “It’s O.K. You’re getting good with this.” Back in the car, they passed the guns forward to Big Nose. He put them in the usual hiding spot, the air-conditioning vent. The murder weapons would later be disposed of by Aleck in a lake in Flushing Meadows–Corona Park, off the Grand Central Parkway. They took the L.I.E. back to Queens, to an Asian-American garage where Chen I. Chung had gone to get his car fixed. The assassination team met I. Chung there, told him that the deed was done, and divided up the victims’ money. Aleck showed I. Chung an expensive-looking cigarette lighter he had lifted from Tina, and asked for permission to keep it. I. Chung told him to go ahead. The *dai lo* was pleased. The only regrets were those expressed by Big Nose. On reflection, he said of Tina Sham, “We should have raped her first.”

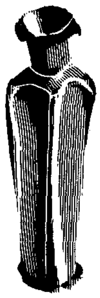
EVER since Tommy Mach moved back to Queens, he had called his mother every Friday night, without exception, but on the evening of February 23rd the phone never rang. Strange that he doesn’t call, Mrs. Mach said. By Sunday, the entire Mach family was in a panic. Steven and an older brother arranged to take off two weeks from work and began driving aimlessly around New York, looking for Tommy’s red Subaru.

As the days went by, Tina’s cousins also grew increasingly afraid that something terrible had occurred. “The whole family of us can't sleep," Beatrice recalls. "Sometimes cry, all the aggravation, Tina's friends coming in, Tommy's friends coming in. Finally, I go to fortune-teller, and they tell me she's not dead. But signs are not good. Tommy's friends want to go to psychics, not fortune-teller, because they're more American kids. The first psychic is a very good one. He says, 'Bring her clothes and bring Tommy's clothes.' When we bring them and walk up the corridor to the psychic's house, he sees us and says, 'Go away! I don't want to see you guys now!' We're shocked. That was almost the first week. I keep praising the Buddha, but nothing happened."

Robert Sham took a different approach to trying to find his daughter. From his son Trini, who was still in state prison, he got a beeper number for Sonny Wong. Trini and Sonny had been good friends in junior high. Robert beeped Sonny and got a call back. Robert said his daughter was missing, and arranged to meet Sonny at a McDonald's on Queens Boulevard. Before the meeting, Chen I. Chung briefed Sonny on how to handle Robert Sham; Sonny denied any knowledge of what might have happened to Tina, and suggested that she might have run afoul of the White Tigers. He also attempted to learn from Robert what, if anything, the police knew.

In fact, the police knew nothing at all, because the bodies had not been discovered. That all changed on March 10th, sixteen days after the murders. The dirt road on which Tina and Tommy were killed was a service road for the Long Island Lighting Company, well hidden between two country estates in Sands Point. A caretaker eventually stumbled on the bodies and called the local police, who in turn notified the Nassau County Homicide Squad. Tommy Mach was identified from a pay stub found in his jacket pocket. Before sunup, police located Tommy's sister in New York and broke the news to her.

The next morning, members of both families were asked to identify the bodies at the morgue. Because it was winter and bitterly cold, the corpses were exceptionally well preserved. First, Tina's body was wheeled into a small room behind a glass partition, a sheet covering all but her face and shoes. "We go together, but they only allow the parents to go in, Robert and Rita," Beatrice Chan recalls. "When Rita start crying very loud, we heard that. All of us start crying very loud, we know that's her."



Then Tommy's body was wheeled in. "I was the first one that identified him," Steven says, struggling in vain to suppress tears at the memory. "The doors open, and the first thing I saw was his shoes—he bought a pair with me—and I just almost faint, because it finally hit me. Until that moment, I still have that dream, that hope, that Tommy is somewhere, that he just run away with Tina. I'd come up with a reason that is really outrageous. He just ran away to the Caribbean with Tina, to a little hideout, and have a sudden marriage, just to surprise us. I keep thinking, If I see him I'm gonna beat him up. But then when I see that pair of shoes my heart just fell, and it fell like to a bottomless cliff, or whatever you call that. I saw his face. He— he looks like he's asleep, but the expression on his face is very *complex*. It's a little anger, a little sorry—like sorry that he went down, sorry what had happened. But I know one thing. He is scared! Not only that he face what he has to face with guys surrounding him with guns and all that. But the biggest fear I think he has is that probably the family will never find him, because the place is very secluded. I want to talk to him, I keep asking him to wake up or something. I knock on the glass. But he just lie there. All of a sudden, I have a feeling like an invisible hand grab hold of my heart and just squeeze it and squeeze it, and it's so painful. That's when my sisters take me out the door. Even now, I still dream of that face."

As a reward for the double homicide, Chen I. Chung soon put Roger Kwok in charge of a gang apartment on Ithaca Street. Roger had fired fatal bullets. Brian Chan still had not done so. But another opportunity arose only four days later.

The Green Dragons were bitter enemies of a Vietnamese gang called Born To Kill, headquartered at a shopping mall on Canal Street in Chinatown. A large gang, with more than a hundred members, Born To Kill took its name from a popular slogan on G.I.s' helmets in Vietnam. Many members were tattooed with the letters "B.T.K." and a coffin and three candles, signifying "no fear of death." Born To Kill was the only major Chinatown gang not affiliated with a tong. The gang took direction from a latter-day Fagin named David Thai, who ran a prosperous counterfeit-watch business and a couple of massage parlors. Born To Kill terrorized Vietnamese establishments on and around Canal Street, and also wormed its way into Queens.

On February 27, 1990, Brian Chan, Roger Kwok, and Big Nose were cruising in Brian's bullet-pocked car. Some time between 5:20 and 6 P.M., they spotted four young men walking toward Linda's Beauty Salon and believed them to be Born To Kill members. Brian made a sharp U-turn and chased them. At the corner of Britton Avenue and Ketcham Street, Brian stopped the car, jumped out, and shot one of the young men dead with a .380 semi-automatic. Police found the body face down on the sidewalk, legs crossed. The victim appeared to have fallen in mid-stride.

It turned out that the victim was not a member of Born To Kill. His name was Jin Lee Seok, and he belonged to a gang called Korean Power. This was a problem, because the Green Dragons and Korean Power had a peace agreement. Tony Kim, one of the bosses of Korean Power, got on the phone with Chen I. Chung and expressed his outrage. The two gangs quickly came to terms. No one in Korean Power would testify against Brian Chan, because of the unwritten rule that gangsters must never coöperate with the authorities. However, Korean Power had permission to settle the matter privately; that is, if the gang wished to kill Brian, that was all right with the Green Dragons.

The murder investigation of Tina Sham and Tommy Mach was turned over to a Nassau County homicide detective named Peter Blum. He had never worked on an Asian-crime case before. When he learned that Tina's father had been busted as a "mule"—federal prosecutors' slang for a low-level heroin smuggler—and had agreed to testify against his drug supplier, Blum initially thought that Tina might have been murdered in revenge. Robert Sham assured Blum that this was

ADAGES OF A GRANDMOTHER

Grandmother said to me, "Keep thyself
unspotted from the world." She spoke in quotes.
I got the feeling that she had rehearsed
all her admonitions as a child,
for when she issued them to me she grew
solemn and theatrical. I knew
she tasted in her words some sweet,
indissoluble flavor of the past; but even more,
as though at eighty-five or eighty-six
she stood still in the parlor of her recitation—
a plain, studious girl with long, brown braids
(I have the portraits of her as a child)—
and spoke her lessons for approving guests.
Such touches of girlishness accompanied
her adages. And then she gave me dimes
for so many lines of Shakespeare memorized.
For "The quality of mercy..." I was paid
a quarter, and at tea I gave her guests
a dollar's worth of Shakespeare with their toast.
"All the world's a stage," she reminded me.

Only armed with an adage might I sally forth.
"A foolish son's his mother's grief," she thought.
The world was scriptural and stratified.
It held raw veins of wisdom in its side,
like the Appalachians when we journeyed north.
She sat in the front seat of the Buick, hairnet drawn
over her white hair coiled in a dignified bun,
her straw, beflowered hat alert and prim.
From the back seat I'd study her, my grim
grandmother, with her dictatorial
chin, her gold-rimmed spectacles ablaze with all
the glory of the common highway where
field daisies spoke to her in doctrinaire
confidential accents of the master plan
confided to grandmothers by the Son of Man.
Wisdom was talismanic and opaque—
could be carried in a child's small fist
like the personal pebble I fished out of the lake.
And whenever I stepped outside she kissed
my head and armed me with a similitude.
Beyond the screen door, past the windowsill,
the bright earth rang with providence until
even the wise ants at my shoe tips moved
in dark amazements of exactitude,
and the small dusty sparrows swooped innumerably.

I write this on the sun porch of the house
where she lay, an invalid, in her last years.
And I'm abashed to realize I blamed
her stiffness and her stubborn uprightness
for much that happened to me afterward.
Now I look through the window where she looked
and see the sunlight on the windowsill
and wonder what it signifies,
for now I barely recognize
her world outside, as though sunlight effaced
not only human features but their memory.
Her adages are all scattered in my head
(*Neither a borrower, nor a lender be*),
and I cannot think for thinking of the dead
(*Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
consider her ways, and be wise*);
I cannot read the world now with her eyes
(*Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold*).
And I, who used to blame her so,
rummage in my pockets for
a nickel's worth of wisdom for my kids.

—ERIC ORMSBY

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not possible. Then Blum learned that Tina Sham had also been a government witness in the Westchester case against the Green Dragons.

Blum needed to find the last people to see Tina Sham and Tommy Mach alive. Tommy's red Subaru was missing, so Blum ran the plate number through a computer and traced the car to the Ace Towing & Recovery Company, in Queens. The Subaru had been hauled away on February 28, 1990, from a parking lot across the street from the Crown Palace. Blum visited the restaurant with the only Chinese-speaking officer he could find in Nassau County. The eleven-member restaurant staff was extraordinarily unhelpful. (Chen I. Chung had come back after the murders and explicitly cautioned the staff against talking to the police.) When they were shown photographs of Tommy and Tina, they all drew a blank. The workers, mostly Cantonese, claimed not to understand the Chinese police officer, who spoke Mandarin. "Their attitude was 'I do not speak your language. Goodbye,'" Blum recalls.

The New York Police Department provided Blum with a Hong Kong native named Joemy Tam. He spoke Cantonese, and he was extremely persuasive. Tam lectured the restaurant staff on why the Asian community needed to band together and resist intimidation by thugs. Gradually, some of them bought what Tam was selling. One day, Tam and Blum picked up a Crown Palace waitress in front of her house and drove her down Queens Boulevard. It was raining, and they sat under the El. She looked over a police-photo spread, settled on a picture of Chen I. Chung, and said, "That's the *dai lo*." Tam was able to lure others to an interview room at Nassau County police headquarters. Yip Ming Lee, a waiter, identified seven Green Dragons, and remembered which of them had followed Tina and Tommy out of the restaurant.

Blum had identified the abductors in less than a month. Tina Sham's relatives believed they had assisted him by putting a red handkerchief in Tina's suit pocket at her cremation. According to Chinese custom, if a murder victim is given something red to wear, the color will "stick to" the killer and he will be caught. Blum was not one to scoff at Chinese superstition, because of an incident that, he says, "still gives me chills." Tina's parents and her two cousins asked Blum to lead them to the ravine in Sands Point where she had been murdered. According to Buddhist lore, when a person dies violently the soul remains at the spot where death occurred. Tina's family wished to coax her soul into an incense stick and reunite it with her body at the funeral parlor. "The family is dressed all in black," Blum recalls. "They stack up oranges"—a traditional offering to the Buddha—"and put a big incense stick in the ground where Tina was murdered, and bow three times, and pray for Tina's soul to come. All of a sudden, a large brown butterfly appears—must have been two and a half inches in diameter. We had half a foot of snow five days earlier, and it's freezing out, and there is no reason for a butterfly to be coming around. It flies to the top of the knoll and sits on a branch. The family is crying and bowing and praying to this butterfly. They believe it's Tina. I'm standing twenty feet away with two other detectives. The butterfly does a complete circle around us, then circles the family, and is gone. Robert says, 'I told Tina that you were the detectives who were trying to solve her murder. When she flew overhead, she was thanking you.'"

After speaking with the Crown Palace workers, Blum had probable cause to arrest a number of Green Dragons for murder. He did not do so, and for good reason: the federal government asked him to refrain. Not far into his investigation, he discovered that the United States Attorney's office in Brooklyn also had its eye on the Green Dragons. The office planned to use the RICO statute against the Dragons, after a decade of deploying it effectively against the Mafia. At the same time, the Brooklyn office was preparing a second RICO case—this one against Born To Kill.

The federal Green Dragons case had its origin in an investigation of a Queens drug lord named Lorenzo (Fat Cat) Nichols. Between March and August of 1988, the F.B.I. had bugged the telephone of Fat Cat's sister Viola, and two strange voices speaking Chinese piqued the interest of Michael McGuinness, a New York City police sergeant. One of the voices belonged to Foochow Paul Wong, who may have been supplying heroin to Fat Cat. In November, 1989, the Justice Department created C-6, a task force made up of a dozen New York City police detectives (including McGuinness) and an equal number of F.B.I. agents. By December, C-6 had connected Paul Wong with the Green Dragons.

Mike McGuinness steered the Green Dragons case to an assistant U.S. Attorney in Brooklyn named Catherine Palmer. Nicknamed the Dragon Lady, because of her success in prosecuting Asian heroin cases, Palmer is petite, athletic, perky, and quite fearless. She has come close to being the only federal prosecutor killed in the line of duty. On January 29, 1990, a package arrived at her office containing a briefcase, which she had been expecting as a belated Christmas gift from her parents. Palmer would have opened the case immediately except that the return address was unfamiliar. A D.E.A. agent and a police detective slowly lifted the lid, and inside they found a fully loaded sawed-off .22-calibre rifle with a string around the trigger. Last July, David Kwong, a D.E.A. informant who had previously lost his job because Palmer had exposed him as a liar, was convicted of attempted murder. After the attempt, Palmer complained loudly that United States marshals assigned to guard her were getting in her way. The Green Dragons could not have asked for a more stubborn prosecutor.

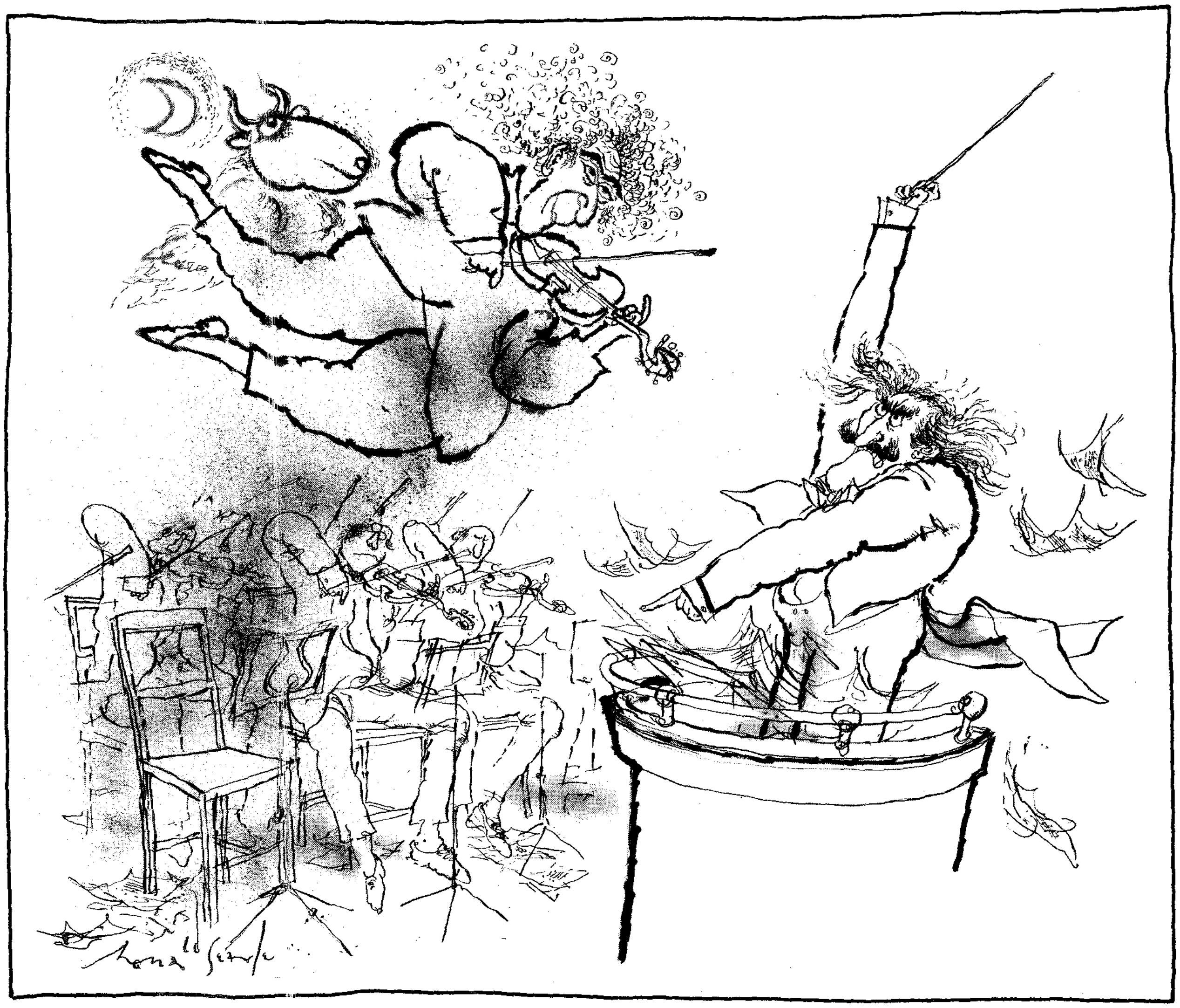
In five years of operation, the Green Dragons had become contemptuous of American law enforcement, and not without reason. Throughout its spree of murder and racketeering, the gang had faced only state cases, most of which had ended in acquittal or in relatively light sentences. The federal government was far better equipped to attack the structure of a criminal enterprise. The hallmark of an F.B.I. investigation is electronic eavesdropping—a costly and labor-intensive procedure, but very often a gangbuster. By August of 1990, C-6 had court approval to listen in on four Green Dragon phones, including a cellular model. Over the next four months, six Asian members of the task force monitored hundreds of conversations, in Cantonese, Mandarin, Fukienese, Vietnamese, and, occasionally, English. Besides gathering evidence to be used one day in court, C-6 learned of crimes still in the planning stage. The trick now was to prevent them without prematurely exposing the investigation.

On September 7, 1990, the C-6 task force drew on a combination of wiretaps and physical surveillance to thwart the robbery of a private house in Yorktown Heights. The house belonged to Chen I. Chung's granduncle—a graphic illustration that gang loyalty came before family. Two police detectives, George Annarella and Richard Arbacas, tailed the robbers to the house. (This was a chore, Annarella recalls. "The Green Dragons drove with no regard to traffic laws. They would cut across three lanes at eighty miles per hour.") Alerted by C-6, Yorktown police set up a roadblock and stopped the gang's car as it left the crime scene. Police found two handguns in the car's air vent, a sock stuffed with ammunition, and a baseball bat on the floorboard. They also found a bag of jewelry and $25,554 in cash. Three Green Dragons were taken into custody.

The next day, C-6 agents listened with amusement to a conversation between Chen I. Chung and his cousin Allen Lin, who had tipped off the *dai lo* that their granduncle was sitting on a pile of money.

"Mother! Damn!" I. Chung said. "It was going all right. It was going fine, and all of a sudden the police showed up! . . . We were just waiting to split up the money. . . . Mother! Right now, I'm really having a headache."

CHEN I. CHUNG had ordered the Yorktown robbery because of the need to replenish the Green Dragons' legal-defense fund. The gang was tens of thousands of dollars in debt to the law firm of Arthur Mass, and was too broke to hire a new attorney. A number of Green Dragons sat in jail awaiting trial for various state offenses, and none



CROSSED PATHS

Chagall Meets Toscanini

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of them placed much faith in court-appointed lawyers. For the moment, I. Chung was particularly worried about Alex Wong, who had been arrested the previous year, at age seventeen, for gun possession, and incarcerated in the juvenile wing at Riker's Island. Alex not only had a hearing coming up on the gun charge but was now a suspect in the double murder he had committed—the shooting at the Tien Chau restaurant of Mon Hsiung Ting and Anthony Gallivan.

Carol Huang, the woman with whom Alex had made eye contact during the shootout, was proving to be a first-class nuisance. First, she described him in remarkably accurate detail to a police sketch artist. Then she identified his picture in a photo spread. Then she picked him out of a lineup at the Fifth Precinct, in Chinatown. Alex did not care for this at all. He could handle three years on the gun charge if need be, but not twenty-five-to-life in a state murder case. On a wiretap he was overheard to say, "The most important thing is, after getting out, I could be still in my twenties, or even my thirties would be fine. Motherfuck!— Just don't let me be in the *forties!*"

On August 18, 1990, it became clear to what lengths the Green Dragons would go to prevent Alex Wong from suffering this fate. Alex was speaking to Sonny Wong by prison phone.

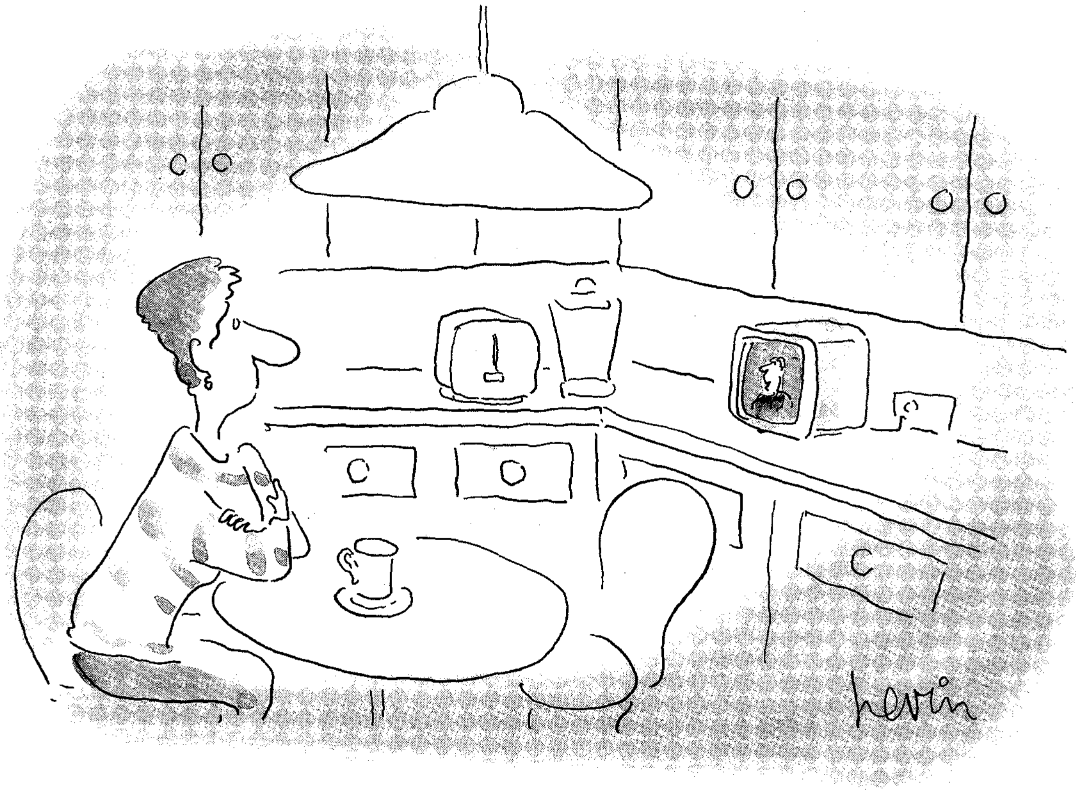
"Everything, everything, is Carol this and Carol that," Alex said.

"Yeah, man," Sonny said. "Motherfuck the bitch!"

"The bitch!"

"I'll see how long she'll last right now. . . . Just let her talk. Talk, talk, talk. . . . And then the next time our lawyer will go up, and if she says something different, then she'll *drop dead*—you know what I'm saying?"

Alex knew precisely what Sonny was saying, and if C-6 had any doubts, the doubts were dispelled in a conversation on August 29th, in which Chen I. Chung told Alex, "That girl, it would be fine if she just disappears." On September 9th, Alex called I. Chung excitedly to tell him he had found "that female's address," accidentally disclosed in some legal papers. According to trial testimony, I. Chung then instructed Sonny to buy a street map, find Carol Huang, and have the gang kill her and burn her body. Fortunately, by this time Carol



"Today on 'Oprah' those who are still employed, and the people who love them."

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Huang had been warned by the police and had gone into hiding.

By November 5th, Alex Wong was feeling desperate and disillusioned. "Whether I am going to sit in jail or not, it all depends on you guys, man," he told Brian Chan.

"I know."

"You *know*. . . . Motherfuck, man! I might as well wash my ass to sit in jail."

"Fuck! Don't say that, man! Shit!"

"No, man. . . . Every time I talk to [Chen I. Chung], he says just wait a fucking while. Fuck his mother, I have waited for six months. No fucking thing has been done. . . . I'm going crazy, man! Freaking, man! . . . I don't even have a single fucking lawyer, you know? . . . It caused my father to have died already. . . . That's why I'm so incensed. . . . Lost a fucking father, man. For what, man? For nothing! . . . I have followed [I. Chung] for three years. . . . Loyalty, *fuck you*."

AT this point, Chen I. Chung might have begun to question his own loyalty to Foochow Paul, who was sitting pretty in hideouts in Fukien and Canton. But bugged conversations between the two revealed I. Chung to be as obsequious as ever. Paul's mind appeared to be on matters other than the financial worries of his gang. He considered investing two hundred thousand dollars to become a silent partner in a new *karaoke* club in Queens, but airily suggested that a member of the Green Dragons try to borrow bail money from his father. By November of 1990, Paul had been gone for four months, and there was no evidence that he had donated a cent of his enormous drug profits to his young followers.

"When are you coming back, Big Brother?" I. Chung asked.

"I am planning to come back."

"You are?"

"I won't delay any more."

He never returned.

ARTHUR MASS, the Green Dragons' alleged house counsel, was getting impatient.

"If I have the motherfucking money, O.K., I'll then give it to you guys, O.K.?" Sonny Wong told him. "If I don't have the motherfucking money, what do you want me to do, man?"

It was September 12, 1990, five days after the failed robbery in Yorktown Heights.

"Business is business," Mass said. "You know I know the problems. But when you make a statement that you're going to deliver and you don't, it hurts. . . . All right, get the word to your Big Brother."

THE pace of restaurant extortions stepped up as the gang's finances sank deeper into the red. A grand opening was a welcome event, because it was traditional at such times for gangs to collect "lucky money"—a large inaugural extortion payment. Often the required sum was a multiple of a hundred and eight—a thousand and eighty dollars was common for a restaurant—because that was the number of Buddhist monks who defended the Shaolin monastery in the seventeenth century. The wiretaps were full of references to "the red envelope," traditional for gift-giving among Chinese and for the payment of lucky money. In September, there was much discussion of moon cakes, because September is the month of the Chinese Moon Festival, and the Green Dragons forced restaurants to buy twenty-dollar boxes of cakes for up to five hundred dollars apiece.

In October, Chen I. Chung and Sonny Wong went to Fa Chung Fa, a new night club on Queens Boulevard in Elmhurst, to talk to the manager about lucky money and weekly protection payments. She informed them that the club already had an arrangement with a Chinatown gang, the Ghost Shadows. A week later, the Green Dragons and the Ghost Shadows held a summit meeting at the club and came to terms: the Dragons would get a thousand and eighty dollars in lucky money, and each gang would collect three hundred dollars in weekly protection.

October was a month of diplomacy for Chen I. Chung. On the twenty-eighth, he sat down with the White

Tigers and forged a peace agreement. The gangs would not fight, provided everyone kept to his own turf—Elmhurst for the Dragons, Flushing for the Tigers. Privately, I. Chung remained wary of the Tigers, having read in a Chinese-language newspaper that the gang was encroaching upon Elmhurst. The next day, October 29th, I. Chung mentioned this story to Brother Lok of the Ghost Shadows.

"No, no such thing, silly!" he was assured.

"It was reported so big in the papers."

"The papers! They just say so, they don't know."

But on November 13th I. Chung's worst suspicions were confirmed. An underboss in the White Tigers, who was known as Lobster, had gone into the Fa Chung Fa and collected a red packet full of lucky money.

Over the next five days, Brian Chan, acting as I. Chung's spokesman, had several heated discussions about this breach of contract with Chris Chin, the *dai lo* of the White Tigers, and Chin's brother Ah Kin. Finally, Ah Kin admitted that Lobster had collected the red packet, but countered that the Green Dragons had broken the agreement first by allowing the Ghost Shadows to operate in Queens. "Queens is supposed to be split up between I. Chung and us," Ah Kin reminded Brian. "We said, 'Is this fucking for real?' How could Gum Pai"—a street boss in the Ghost Shadows—"extend his living from Chinatown to Queens?"

This was war. All that was needed was a formal declaration, and it came in the early-morning hours of November 19, 1990, in a telephone call between Chen I. Chung and an unidentified street boss of the White Tigers. Suddenly, leaders of two feared criminal enterprises showed themselves for what they were—boys.

"I'll kill you!" said the White Tiger. "You think the Green Dragons are so swell?"

"Fuck you!" said I. Chung.

"I'm going to kill your entire family, O.K.? I know where you guys live. . . ."

"I fuck your asshole. . . . I fuck your mother's asshole. . . ."

"Green Dragons!"

"What about Green Dragons?"

"Green Dragons are useless!"

"Then you come out!"

"Come out!"

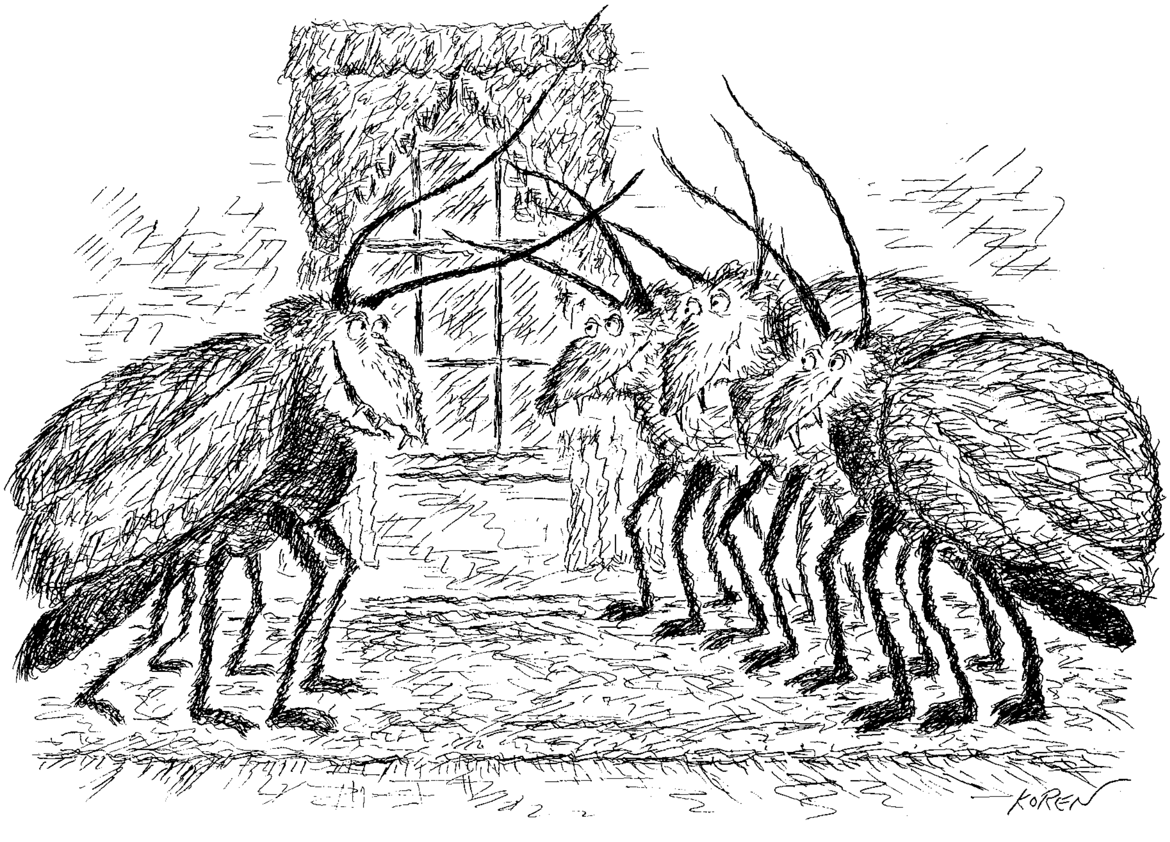
"Ha!"

It was agreed: the gangs would face off at 3 P.M. that day, at a record store on Northern Boulevard. The Green Dragons, however, never showed up, for as they set out to rumble the White Tigers Chen I. Chung and the top members of his gang were placed under arrest.

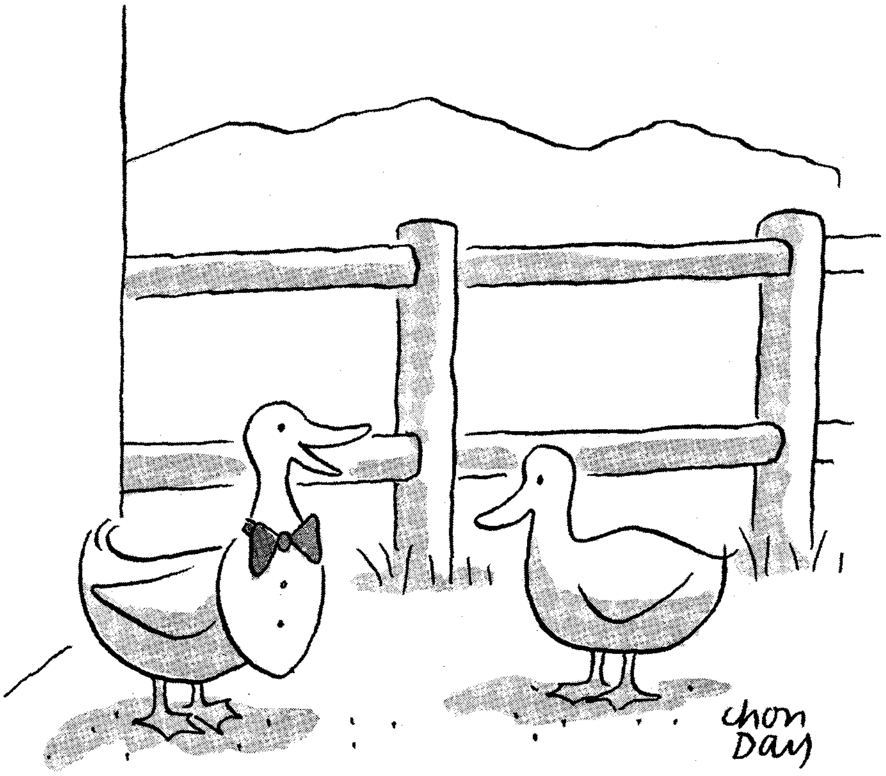
THE government had not wanted to collar the gang suspects quite so soon. More than enough evidence had been gathered to dismantle the Green Dragons, but the big boss, Paul Wong, was still at large, and there was no extradition treaty between China and the United States. Chen I. Chung's explosive parley with the White Tiger boss left the Feds little choice. If the suspects were not apprehended, they would probably kill or be killed.

On the day of the arrests, the surveillance team followed several gang members from Linda's Beauty Salon to the gang apartment run by Roger Kwok, in the basement of the house on Ithaca Street. New York City police, F.B.I. agents, and SWAT officers armed with M-16s ("dressed in their Ninja suits," one cop recalls) surrounded the house. About a dozen gang members, some of them armed, emerged and headed for two cars. All were arrested without a shot being fired. Sonny Wong attempted to flee through the back door but was stopped by a rifle-wielding officer on the roof.

The next day, police searched Chen I. Chung's apartment in Woodhaven. They found fifteen weapons, including an Uzi machine pistol hidden on top of a ceiling tile, and a bulletproof vest between I. Chung's bed and nightstand. (Police also found a calendar on which I. Chung had marked off each week's extortions.) Guns were recovered from other gang apartments and cars. All in all, the police collected an arsenal of thirty-one weapons—more than enough



"It's a perfect day to reorganize those closets!"



"It's a ducky dickey."

• •

to fill an evidence cart at the trial, for the awed inspection of the jury.

The police had located the firearms without much difficulty, because someone had tipped them off to where they should look. That person was a suspect who had been persuaded to "flip"—become a government informant—on the first night of his arrest. The informant was Sonny Wong.

It appeared to have been Sonny's destiny all along. His gang brothers had always suspected him of being weak. At F.B.I. headquarters, Sonny was separated from his colleagues and interrogated by William Murnane and James Hughes, of the N.Y.P.D., and by Peter Blum, of Nassau County. Sonny began to cry. Within a few hours, the officers had extracted a signed confession.

Five months later, Pete Blum bagged another prize. Not long after the murders of Tina Sham and Tommy Mach, one of the killers, Aleck Yim, had quit the gang, because, he later explained, "I wasn't making money." He had gone to Florida for a time, and then returned in April, 1991, to the streets of New York, where Blum and another detective arrested him. Blum was able to persuade Yim that the government could prove he had helped kill Sham and Mach, and that it would be best for him to confess. Yim pleaded guilty to murder and agreed to testify at the forthcoming trial of the Green Dragons.

Meanwhile, Sonny Wong, like his gang brothers, was thrown into the Metropolitan Correctional Center, but segregated on the eleventh floor. (Sonny had agreed to plead guilty to one count apiece of assault, kidnapping, and extortion.) The Green Dragons remained in detention, awaiting trial. Somehow, by the spring of '91 Chen I. Chung had learned that his former right-hand man had copped out.

On June 4, 1991, the F.B.I. monitored a phone call placed by Chen I. Chung from the M.C.C. to Foochow Paul, in China. Though Paul Wong once again promised to "be there" for the young men who had followed him with love and reverence, it was clear that he had callously written them off. I. Chung, however, continued to kowtow to his leader.

"I'm just worried about the one on the eleventh floor," I. Chung said.

"Who?" Paul asked.

"Gu Yu Chai!" (This was Sonny Wong's Cantonese nickname. It meant Playboy.)

"Gu Yu Chai," Paul repeated. "I am still looking for his family members, you understand."

The government took alarmed note of that.

"I'm telling you, you can fight this case," Paul said.

"Mmm-hmm."

"Just in case . . . ten years. When you come out, I'll be still there. . . ."

"I know, Dai Lo. . . ."

"I'll have a plan. . . ."

"Hey, Dai Lo, here we aren't thinking about anything. That is to say, since you have no problem, then all is fine. . . ."

"My head has become swollen with problems!" Paul said. "You know my situation."

"I know."

THE trial of the Green Dragons opened on February 18, 1992. It was held on the second floor of the federal courthouse in Brooklyn Heights. Cathy Palmer was joined by two co-prosecutors, Loretta Lynch and Margaret Giordano. On the sixth floor, government lawyers were prosecuting the boss and seven members of Born To Kill. The news media ignored both cases in favor of a trial on the fourth floor, that of the Mafia boss John Gotti.

If the media underestimated the Green Dragons case, so did the nine defendants: Chen I. Chung, Tony (Big Nose) Tran, Brian Chan, Roger Kwok, Alex Wong, Joseph Wang, Steven Ng, Jay Cheng, and Danny Ngo. This was a federal RICO case, and the penalties were severe. Murder in aid of racketeering carries a mandatory sentence of life without parole. In the past, mandatory life had been handed out to the likes of Fat Tony Salerno and other aging mafiosi. The Green Dragon defendants ranged in age from eighteen (Roger Kwok) to twenty-three (Chen I. Chung). Yet the defendants remained very much a gang, arrogant and invincible—laughing and smirking to a degree almost never seen in federal court. Perhaps they still believed that Foochow Paul would swoop down and rescue them—even though Legal Aid, and not Foochow Paul, had provided their lawyers.

On February 20th, Loretta Lynch called to the stand Charlie Lo, the man whose apartment had been robbed and whose wife had been raped. (Since rape is not considered a racketeering act, the crime was not charged and was never mentioned in open court.) Within moments, Cathy Palmer was on her feet, complaining to the judge that Big Nose was giving Lo the finger. After Lo testified, Palmer fished out of a wastebasket a graphic drawing of a nude made by Chen I. Chung. It became a court exhibit. The atmosphere of the trial grew steadily more tense after that.

On February 25th, Carol Huang identified Alex Wong as the young man who had shot and killed two people at the Tien Chau restaurant. Under questioning by Loretta Lynch, Christine Gallivan described to a stunned courtroom how her husband, Anthony, had died in her arms.

On February 26th, the government displayed large, graphic photographs of the dead bodies of Tina Sham and Tommy Mach. During a break, as the defendants marched out, Big Nose stopped at the government table to glance admiringly at a picture of his handiwork. Then he locked eyes with Tommy's brother Steven, in the courtroom as a spectator. Cathy Palmer recalls, "He goes 'Hee-hee! Hee-hee! Hee-hee!' as if to say, 'Yeah, we killed them—and we enjoyed it.' "

On February 27th, the government called Yip Ming Lee, the only worker at the Crown Palace who consented to testify. Lee was shaking so hard he had to grip the witness stand. That morning, as he had walked toward the courthouse, a blue sedan pulled up and a young Chinese man opened the door. "Hey, kid," he warned Lee in Cantonese. "Be careful of what you say. Be fucking careful."

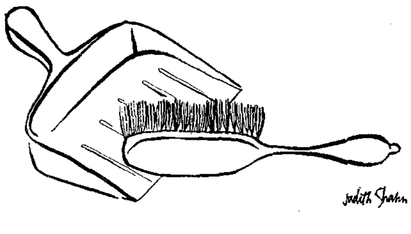
On March 4th, the government called Sonny Wong. He testified for more than eight days. In authenticating the wiretaps, Sonny severely damaged the defense. On March 12th, as the Green Dragons left the courtroom during a break, Big Nose turned to Sonny and hissed, "Watch yourself!" Under his breath, I. Chung added, "Scum!"

On April 9th, after three and a half days of deliberation, the (anonymous) jury found all the defendants guilty on virtually every count in the indictment. Last month, Judge Reena Raggi sentenced all the defendants. Chen I. Chung got nine concurrent life terms, with no possibility of parole. Six others got life sentences with no parole: Big Nose, Brian Chan, Roger Kwok, Alex Wong, Joseph Wang, and Jay Cheng. The two gang members who testified, Sonny Wong and Aleck Yim, are yet to be sentenced. The Green Dragons were effectively put out of business.

SHORTLY after the verdicts were handed down, Chen I. Chung agreed to be interviewed. Wearing a brown prison jumpsuit and white Avia sneakers, he was led into the visitors' room on Five North of the M.C.C. He had gained weight in jail. A jade Buddha hung from a gold chain around his neck. He had a hint of a mustache, some hairs on his chin, and a hole in his left earlobe where he had once sported a gold loop. The edges of a tiger tattoo were visible on his left arm. His thumbnails and left little-finger nail were dramatically long and pointed, Fu Manchu style. Unable to get Q-Tips in prison, he said, he had grown his nails to clean out his ears. He was in a bad mood.

After twenty months of prison, I. Chung's English was a bit improved but still subpar. He had learned enough to converse with John Gotti at the M.C.C., and said they had come to an agreement: "The law is dirty, man." I. Chung had nothing but contempt for Cathy Palmer, the federal prosecutor, whom he referred to, inaccurately, as "the D.A." "I don't know why she hate me a lot," he said. "I didn't do wrong." The pornographic sketch he had made in court was meant to be Palmer, he said. "I nothing to do. And they not fair, this court. What I listen for? So I draw, draw, draw, draw, draw that D.A."

He reserved his deepest scorn, however, for Sonny Wong. At the mention of Sonny's name, he nearly spat. To hear I. Chung tell it, it was Sonny who murdered Tina Sham and Tommy Mach. "We went to have tea lunch that day," he began, switching back and forth between Mandarin and English. "After we finished tea lunch, someone noticed Tina. Sonny Wong leaned over and said, 'Remember this girl? In the jail for nothing, two year. Wo wo wo wo wo.' I say, 'Forget about it.' He say, 'You kill that Tina Sham. Take a gun, shoot her in the chest.' And I say, 'Don't do bad thing, O.K.? Don't do it.' After we saw them leave, all of us went to the parking lot. Then I looked around and said to Sonny, 'What are you doing?' And he said, 'I'm taking them to a place.' "



I. Chung did admit that there were those who believed he was responsible for the murders, including Tina Sham's ex-boyfriend in the gang. "Johnny Walker, he come out of jail. And then he calls up my house, and we got a meeting, you know? Come on and go eat. Korean restaurant. And then Walker, he was sighing, 'Ayyy!' He had become numb. I said, 'You know, this is fate. She was killed; there was nothing we could do to prevent it. Destiny, man.' "

Was he prepared to spend the rest of his life in prison? "I can't do it," he said. "I feel that I might commit suicide. I might hang myself. Nobody could take it. Nobody could say, ha ha ha—happy! Who could happy? Come on. I only born in this world twenty-three year." Wasn't it clear by now that Paul Wong had abandoned him? I. Chung shrugged, and said, "Who am I to him?" Did he have any words for Sonny Wong? He did: "Where is your conscience?"

THROUGHOUT the trial, there had been no sign of any defendant's parent or close relative in the courtroom. The shame was too great to bear, particularly in the Asian culture. However, Joseph Young, the uncle and guardian of Brian Chan, sent the judge an ambitious document he had prepared. A computer consultant, Young methodically assembled and captioned a series of photographs of his nephew, tracing his development from infancy. He wanted to show that Brian was a "kind-hearted, outgoing and loving child" who could be "rectified" and "not be a scum of the society," he wrote. But the document only heightens the enigma of Brian Chan. In a snapshot from the summer of 1986, he is happily holding a monkey at Sea World, in Florida. In a government photograph taken after his arrest, only four years later, he is utterly transformed—with two large, menacing eagles tattooed on his chest, and cold, scary eyes.

On being reached by phone, Young

said he was still puzzled by how it happened that Brian had turned so bad. Young had lived in the United Kingdom for over twenty years, and spoke with a clipped British accent. He was more eager to talk about Brian's brother, Perry, who was working for a financial company and studying for his M.B.A.

"He's doing B-plus average while working full time," Young said proudly. "Last year, he took thirteen credits, which is a tremendous effort. This year, he took, I think, nine or ten. He never stopped studying all year round. He listens to me, whereas the younger one is not trying to listen. And then got into trouble—sort of the ultimate trouble that one could ever get into. In American society, being so liberal and so free, children will abuse the family rule, and leave the house, even though the regulations stipulate they should not. Because I am not a direct parent, there's a certain limit to what I can do. And, fortunately, one of them I salvaged completely." Young allowed himself a satisfied little laugh. "I'm happy already."

CONVERGENCES

MAGRITTE STANDARD TIME

In olden days, time was true. Noon occurred in every village at the very moment that the sun reached its zenith over the courthouse steeple. Trains—in particular, transcontinental rail travel—changed all that. In the era before time zones, passengers on coast-to-coast trips might well have had to jimmy their watches dozens of times, adjusting to the separate temporal reality of each locality through which they travelled. (Schedules were similarly scrambled; New York City's noon was Buffalo's 11:40.) For years, people puzzled over these mysteries and muddled through the confusion—what did it mean, for instance, to say that two events happened at the same time in two different locations?—until, in 1884, an international conference finally resolved the problem by decreeing a unified system of standardized time zones.

Is it any wonder that a genius, born in 1879 and growing up in a world grappling with these issues, would go on to formulate a theory of relativity which deployed trains as one of the principal motifs in its exploration of simultaneity? ("Lightning has struck the rails on our railway embankment at two places *A* and *B* far distant from each other. . . .") And is it any wonder that, a generation later, a leading Surrealist painter would have recourse to the same train motif in his 1938 painting "Time Transfixed"?

But what of *this* coincidence: René Magritte was born in 1898 in Lessines, Belgium. The train pictured in the photograph on the right overshot the Gare Montparnasse, in Paris, on October 22, 1895. Surely no relation. Except that it was Magritte himself who gave us to understand that everything is relative and everything is simultaneous.

Next week, his marvellous show at the Metropolitan will be leaving the station, bound for Houston and Chicago.

—Lawrence Weschler

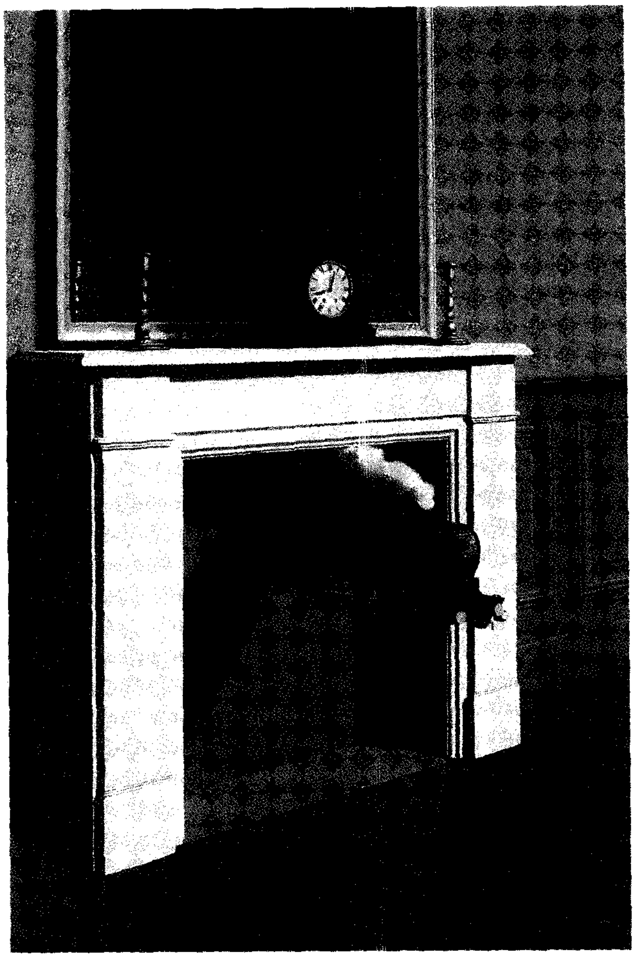
Robert Sham moved to Virginia for a year after his daughter's murder, but now he works at a Korean night club in Flushing, playing the drums in a band from nine-thirty at night to three or four in the morning. He gets to take one-hour breaks while drunken Koreans sing *karaoke*. Robert is dating a Korean woman who works at the bar. To enter the night club, one passes through an airport-style metal detector—to prevent gang members from walking in with their guns—and climbs a flight of stairs. The club is enormous, with disco balls and klieg lights; smoke billows from the dance floor. Robert is the only Chinese in the band, which plays pop standards like "Feelings" and the love theme from "The Godfather," along with hit Korean tunes. Now forty-five, Robert wears his hair slicked back and tied behind in a pony tail. There is an earring in his left ear. He wears a white tuxedo shirt and black pants—the club uniform.

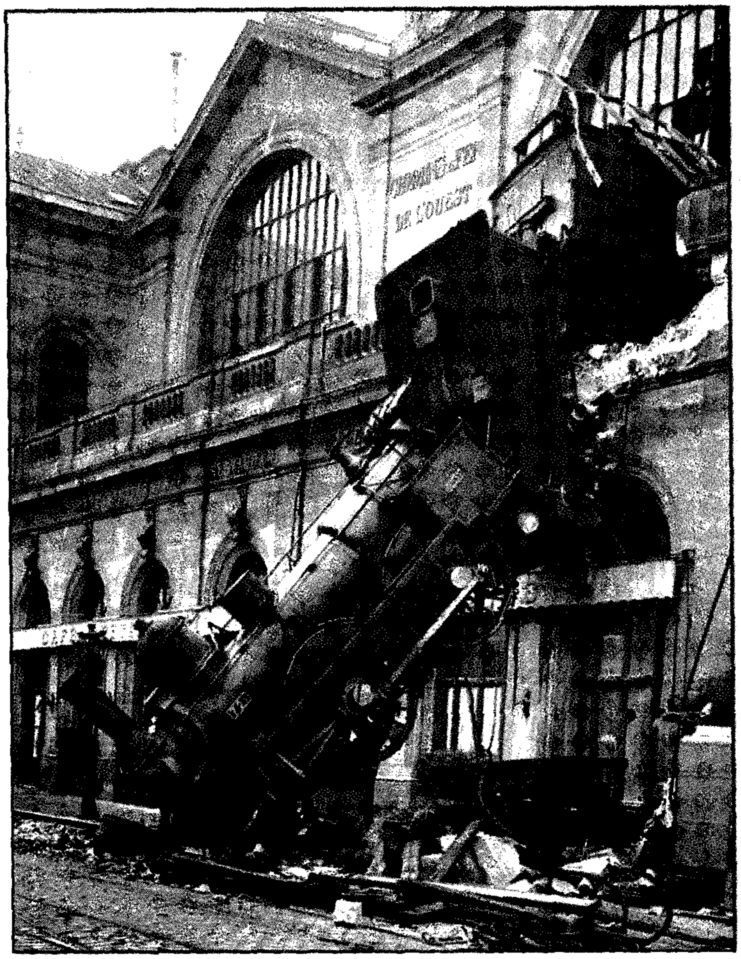
On the way up the stairs, Robert's niece Dorothy warns, "He looks depression and skinny and he lost a lot of weight, and his girlfriend told me he was drunk all the time." Robert does seem depressed. A few weeks earlier, he went down to Chinatown to install a picture of Tina at a Buddhist temple on Mott Street, and the previous day he had gone to visit the tomb containing her ashes at a cemetery in New Jersey. His son Trini, now out of jail (and, in the view of the parole board, thoroughly rehabilitated), joined him.

"She always next to me, I feel like she always there," Robert says of his daughter. "When I play sad song, especially American song, forget about it. I'm the best. I love sad song, for Tina, my daughter. Sad song remind me. I love her too much. When I see her body, I hit the wall—*pow!* My hand was hurt. Because I know the Buddha punish me, for my drug business—what happen to my daughter, my son. And I pay for it, too. I believe that Tina died because maybe she take all my bad luck away. I believe that. She took all my suffer away. But I feel like no hope. I got a good dream, recording. But what I fight for? I fight for my family, but she gone."

The mood at the Mach residence is equally sombre. Steven continues to live there, with his parents and his wife. Near the dining-room table is a shrine to his brother—a small wooden cabinet upon which stands a framed photograph of Tommy, wearing a tuxedo. In front of the photograph is a brass box containing his ashes. Next to these are fresh flowers and fruit, and electric candles. The shelves hold an assortment of Tommy's clothing and other possessions, including a remote-control model Porsche, skin-care products, sunglasses, and the wings Tommy earned when he got his F.A.A. certification. On top of the cabinet is a plate with some food.

"That's dim sum we had this morning, so we put some there," Steven says. "A few hours later, we just throw them out. It's a way to express our respect. Every morning, before I go to work I drink a glass of orange juice, so I'll pour him a glass. I'll burn incense for him, I'll tell him I'm going to work. I know this is like useless, it sound kind of crazy, too, but it make me feel better that I don't leave him out, because we always eat dinner together when he was alive. A lot





THE JOSEPH WINTERBOTHAM COLLECTION / DOCUMENTS ROGER-VIOLLET

of times, if I go out for dinner, or anything, if I forget to tell him, I feel really guilty."

Steven's mind keeps returning to October 2, 1977, the night his family took to the sea to escape Vietnam. "That night the sea was really choppy," Steven recalls. "Every time our tiny boat go through a wave, it slam down, and the noise it creates is horrifying. Tommy and my little sister were huddled under my mom's arm. And Tommy said, 'Mom, I'm really scared. If this boat is not going to hold and we fall into the ocean, are we all gonna die?' At that time, Tommy was ten years old; I was thirteen. My mom said to him, 'Don't worry, son. If anything happen, we all good swimmers. We'll hold on to you, and we'll all be safe.'

"We went through all that, right? And when we live in Vietnam it was a war-torn country. We survive all that, and we came to America, supposedly a safe haven for us, and this is where Tommy got killed. That's something I can never swallow. People say America is a land of opportunity, a land for the dreamers. I have that dream before, I have that feeling, too. And now I have to say America is not a land of opportunity, it is more a land of opportunists. Because those gangsters, they come here, they just terrorize people, and do anything they want. They have not only terminated a young person's life, and shattered his dreams—Tommy has a bright future and all that—but for the family, we have to suffer, and we have to suffer forever."

THE families of Tina Sham and Tommy Mach no longer speak to each other. "They mad at us. Maybe we mad at them," Dorothy Chan says. "You can see on their face they don't like us—especially Steven." The last time an attempt was made to communicate was at Tommy's cremation. "I go with Robert, he wants to go, we try to pay some respect," Beatrice remembers. "But they weren't talking to us, they weren't even look at us. The mother even using her eyes like this. Then we sit for a while, and then we go out. I know the parents is very mad and sad. I don't blame them. Maybe they think the cause is because of Tina. You know Chinese, they always want to blame. But it isn't fair."

Steven: "The thing that kind of bugs me—I don't know whether I should say it—but when we first find out that Tommy was missing, my sister call Tina's cousin. And the first thing they said was: Was Tommy a gangster? My sister said, No, no, he's not anything like that. We didn't even ask the same question for them. Because it's inconceivable for us to think Tommy would date an ex-gang girl. See, I know that Tina is also one of the victims, and I'm not trying to blame anyone, it's not her fault. But I don't think Tommy knows who Tina really is. Because if Tommy knows Tina's background, he would never go out with her. He's not going to do something crazy like that. So the biggest mystery for us is we never know whether Tommy knows why he is killed. Nobody will ever know. Only between them two." ♦

PERSONAL HISTORY

MY FATHER'S HONOR

by Tony Hiss

My father, Alger Hiss, turns eighty-eight this week, and if you've ever heard of him maybe the most remarkable thing you know is that he's had to spend the last forty-four years trying to convince people that he had never done what many thought he had done during his first forty-four years. Only two weeks have passed since my father's story was suddenly given a very public happy ending, and I'm still finding what has happened almost too good to be true. It has been hard for me to believe that after more than sixteen thousand days his long ordeal is over. Not for him. He says that because he has always looked forward to, and worked hard to achieve, his eventual vindication, now that it's here it's something he can enjoy—a prize that has been earned, a wrong made right. The only thing that has surprised him, he says, is that it has all happened so abruptly.

I'm personally far more comfortable dealing with bad news about the Hiss case than he is, probably because ever since my seventh birthday—the day my father first went to Washington to deny charges of Communist activity—dealing with bad news is mostly what his story has been about. There has been good news now and then, and steadfast hope, but it always seemed to go away again—the news, not the hope. And now my days are filled with good news of the kind that feels here to stay. Glowing newspaper articles all over the country, along with front-page, full-color pictures of my beautiful stepmother, Isabel Johnson, giving my father a big hug. Warm phone calls from old friends and from people I've never met, one of them a woman whose five-year-old daughter wanted to know who Alger Hiss was. When the girl heard the story and its new ending, she said, "Mommy, *I* want to tell the truth."

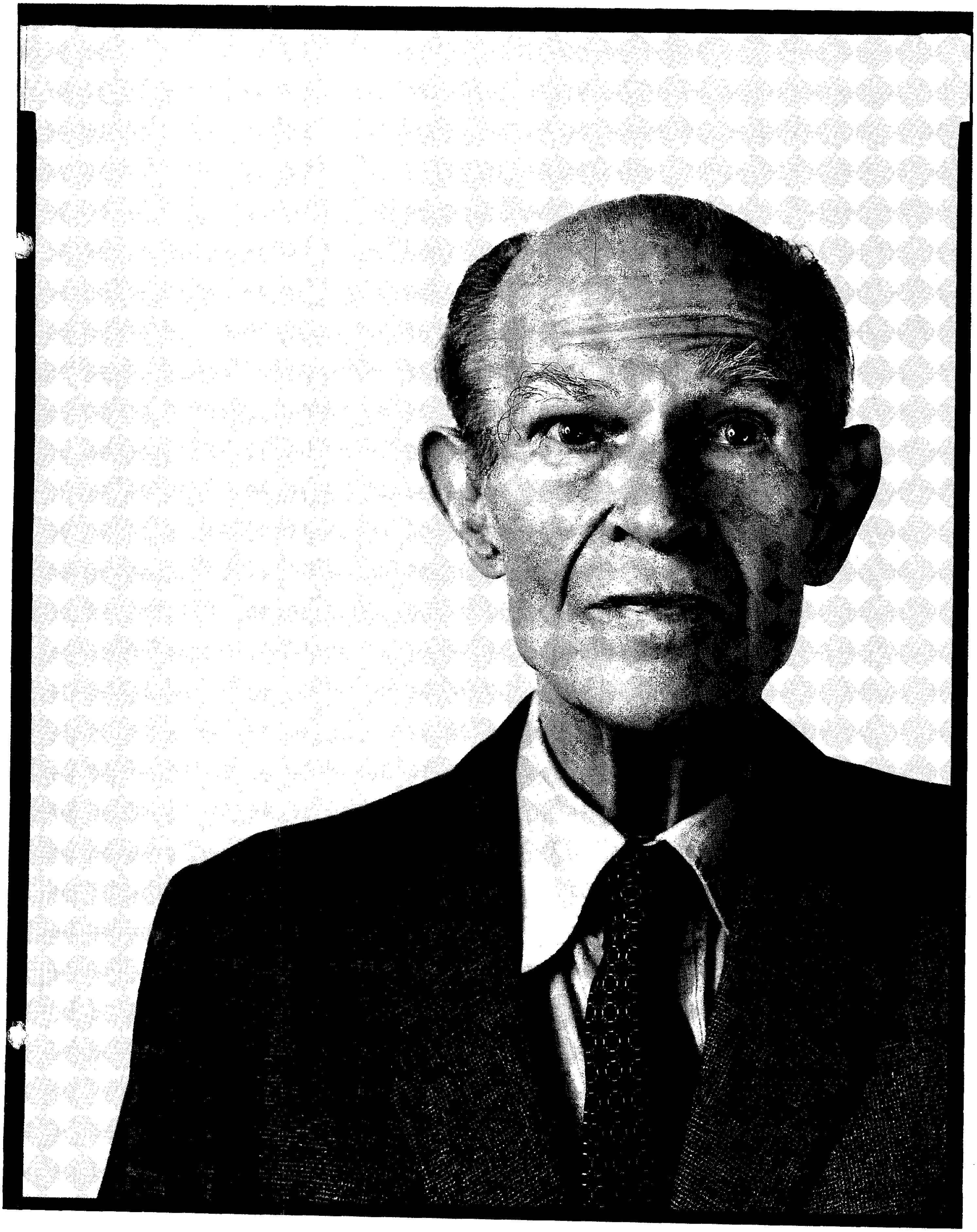
Maybe so it can all sink in, I keep replaying the fundamental new piece of good news—an eight-and-a-half-minute videotape recorded in Moscow on October 15th, in which the historian and Stalin biographer Colonel General Dmitri Antonovich Volkogonov, who is the military counsellor to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and the chairman of the Supreme Council commission on K.G.B. and military-intelligence archives of the former Soviet Union, states that a careful review of "a huge amount of documents" has allowed him to "make a firm conclusion that Alger Hiss was not ever or anywhere recruited as an agent of the intelligence services of the Soviet Union." Then the General says, looking straight into the camera, "Tell Mr. Alger Hiss that the heavy weight should be lifted from his heart. . . . May he in his advanced age breathe freely and look with wide-open eyes at this wonderful, complex, and multifaceted world of ours."

This tape was first shown at a crowded news conference at the Algonquin Hotel, in New York, on October 29th (another birthday, the day my own son hit sixteen months); the conference was broadcast live around the world by CNN International. So, whether or not I'm still struggling with this good news, it is something that people everywhere have been told about, and now they know what my family and my father's devoted friends and well-wishers have always known—that Alger Hiss was not a Communist, not a spy, not a traitor. For me the real glory in all this, now that I can start to feel it, is: Now my father can rest easy. And now more people can come to know more of his story, and see what an unusual and successful man he already was, even before the good news came through. And maybe we can all understand more about why it took so ridiculously long for him to clear his name.

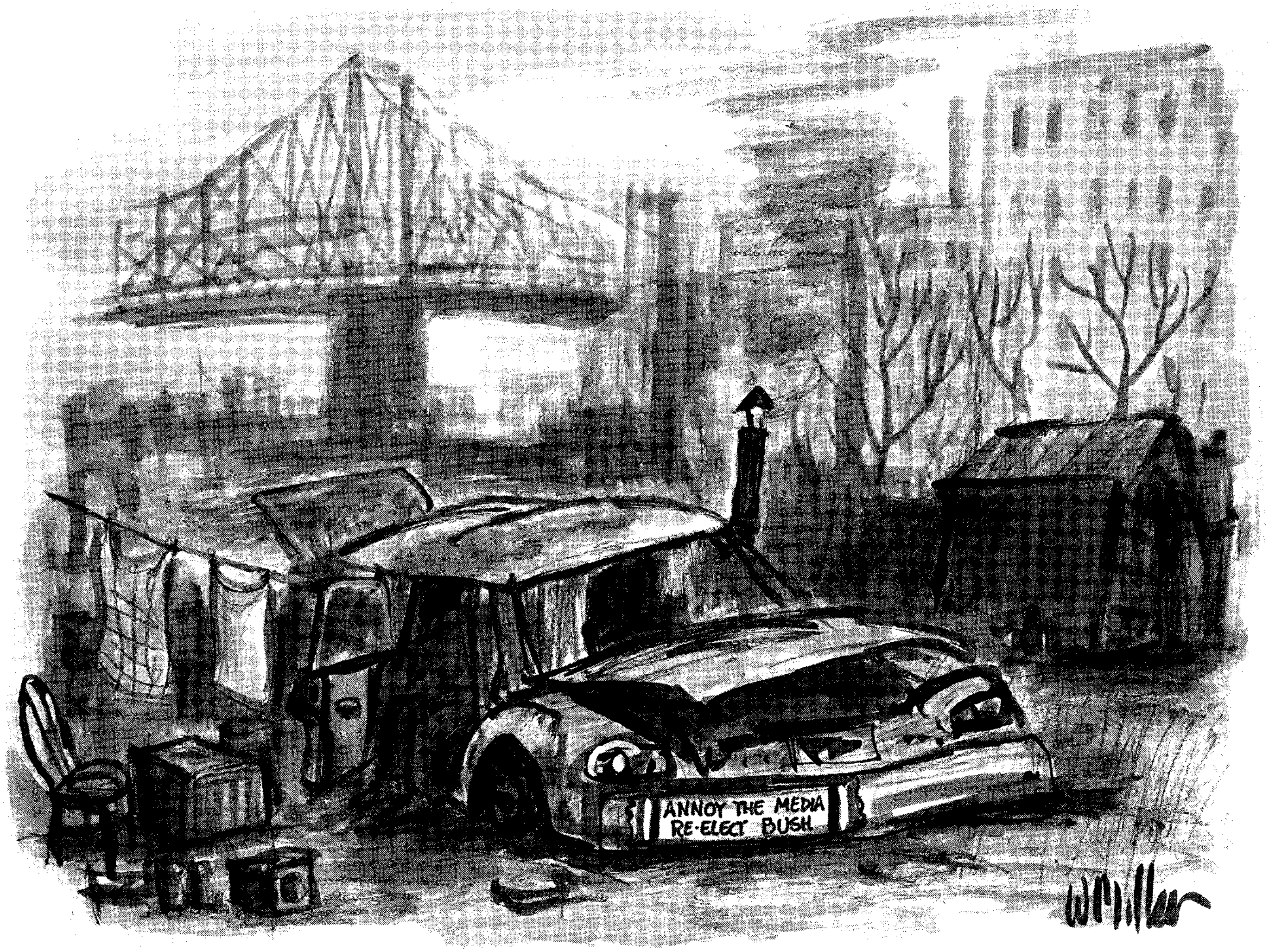
I sometimes think that the second part of my father's life, the time of his formal disgrace (for years, beginning in the nineteen-fifties, *Time* referred to him as "Perjurer Alger Hiss," as if that were his profession), has brought him more rewards than his golden government career as a New Dealer. Still, back before his troubles began, there were those who talked, either admiringly or enviously, about his "meteoric" rise in the State Department, and considered him a possible future Secretary of State. In 1945, when he was forty, he was a junior member of the American delegation that accompanied President Franklin Roosevelt to the Yalta summit conference with Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin. Later that same year, he served as secretary-general of the United Nations organizing conference, in San Francisco; and in official photographs of that conference, which was held in the San Francisco Opera House, you can see him at one end of the dais, a dark-haired and serious young man, poised, handsome, athletic, and elegantly dressed, who looks as though he had just turned thirty.

My father's youthful appearance, something he never seemed to notice, was one of those qualities which used to make people think he had been specially favored by life; it wasn't until after he turned eighty that his age began to catch up with him, although he did start to lose his hair in his late forties, during the forty-four months he spent in jail. In his fifties and sixties, when he was working as a printing-and-stationery salesman, and I would ask him about his government life, he would say that the high point of his career had come just after the San Francisco conference, when he was given the honor of flying the United Nations charter back to Washington in a special plane. The plane ride itself, he said, had made him understand his true importance, because as soon as he climbed aboard he saw that the charter had been given a parachute and he hadn't.

My father left government in 1947 to become president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a New York think tank that regarded the United Nations as a beacon of hope. It was a job he enjoyed tremendously, just



Alger Hiss, photographed by Richard Avedon in New York City, November 3, 1992.



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as he had enjoyed the long hours he put in at all four of the government jobs he held during his fourteen years as a New Dealer. He is a lawyer by training—a cum-laude graduate of Harvard Law, class of 1929, where he served on the *Law Review*. Before that, he attended Johns Hopkins, and made Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year; according to his senior yearbook, Alger was "the most cultured, learned bozo around this neck of the woods" but "a nice chappie, in spite of his attainments." In 1933, like many idealistic young New Dealers, he was recruited to work in Washington by Felix Frankfurter, who sent him a telegram telling him that his presence was required "on basis of national emergency." While he was in Washington, he worked for three Cabinet agencies—Agriculture, Justice, and State—and in between the last two he had a job with the Senate, serving as chief counsel to the Nye committee; as famous in its day as the Watergate committee was in the seventies, its mission was to investigate profiteering in the munitions industry during the First World War.

I know that, of all his government assignments, my father has always been proudest of his work in helping to get the United Nations going. His idea, shared by other American United Nations founders, wasn't so much to set up a world government as it was to prepare something that could someday, when it became necessary, take a role in supporting a worldwide refocussing of people's attention on their underlying problems. I think that when my father hears about the United Nations and its work today he gets the kind of satisfaction that gardeners get in the fall when their spring bulbs are already in the ground.

I myself have always been proud of owning a postcard, printed in thousands by the John Birch Society some years ago, that shows a picture of the United Nations Secretariat Building, on the East River in New York, under the caption "The House That Hiss Built." My father says that the Birchers gave him far too much credit—that the only house he has been responsible for is the modest headquarters building, near the United Nations, of the Carnegie Endowment. I also have a copy of "Martian Time-Slip," a 1964 science-fiction novel by Philip K. Dick; he is a writer I read and reread for years, because in his books reality keeps shifting out from under people. In Dick's bleak vision of Mars—the time is 1994—the red planet is a scraggly place. It has a small human colony that's not doing very well. On the outskirts of the capital, out by the open desert, is "the monument to Alger Hiss, the first UN martyr." Except for the Birchers' postcard, this is the only written record I've ever found to an Alger Hiss memorial. When I met Phil Dick, in the nineteen-seventies, he told me that his remark had been meant as a sincere compliment. "The world as I imagined it got better, so they put up a statue to your father," he said. "Unfortunately, then it got worse again for a while."

Probably the most joyful position my father ever held was his first job out of law school: for a year, he was a law clerk for Oliver Wendell Holmes, who, at eighty-eight, was still sitting as a justice on the United States Supreme Court. Three years later, my Uncle Donald, Alger's younger brother, also clerked for Holmes, and this is one of the real distinctions our branch of the Hiss family can lay claim to: two brothers chosen to work for the wisest mind ever to serve on the Supreme Court. Both Alger and Donald idolized this upright and hardworking old patriot—still ramrod straight, with his booming voice and his gorgeous white handlebar mustache—no doubt in part because their own father had committed suicide when they were small boys. But they also felt that spending time with Holmes was like being accepted as new recruits into the permanent work force of men and women whose job it was to construct this country.

Holmes covered the entire span of American history—the "great span," as Alger thought of it. When, late in the Civil War, President Lincoln, in his tall black stovepipe hat, came striding along the battlements during a fierce skirmish just north of Washington, it was the young Captain Holmes who yelled out, "Get down, you damn fool!" And years before that, when Holmes was a little boy, his grandmother told him that when she was a little girl she had seen the Redcoats marching into Boston in the opening days of the American Revolution. The family house on Beacon Hill had been requisitioned as headquarters for Lord Howe, the British commandant, and Holmes owned a cloudy old mirror from that house. The mirror later came to Alger, and it now hangs in my living room, in Greenwich Village. "Sometimes when I look into the glass, I think I can see Lord Howe's bewigged face staring back at me," Holmes liked to say to Alger. "Can you see it, sonny? Can you see it?"

THE Hiss case flared into headlines in 1948, but, according to Whittaker Chambers, the man who accused my father of stealing State Department documents for Chambers to give to the Russians, the real events of the case had taken place in the nineteen-thirties. General Volkogonov's investigations this summer and his search through Soviet intelligence files confirm the fact that Chambers was at one time a member of the American Communist Party, as he always maintained. But the Soviet archives, the General says, also reveal that Chambers never at any time had "any kind of secret or spy information." And so all of Chambers' many complicated stories—both the ones about the devilish plots he devised to try to undermine his country and the ones about the revulsion he later felt for those misdeeds—were only stories. Everyone has always acknowledged that Chambers was a magnificent writer.

Nevertheless, I've always thought that Chambers was right about one particular; namely, that the trouble began in the nineteen-thirties. Not everyone who came to Washington, even during the New Deal, was there to answer the country's call. If my father has a shortcoming, it's his inability to understand, or protect himself from, the consequences of certain aspects of human nature.

For instance, during the Nye committee's hearings the senators were happy to let Alger ask all the tough questions. One of the witnesses was Bernard M. Baruch, a highly respected financier and elder statesman, who liked to be known as "the adviser to Presidents." Baruch had been chairman of the War Industries Board during the First World War, and when he took the witness stand Alger's questions brought out the fact that he had done very well during the war by investing in some of the companies he was regulating. From that day forward, Baruch told anyone who would listen that Alger Hiss was a Communist. (Baruch had a protégé, James F. Byrnes, who held down a number of important jobs—representative, senator, justice of the Supreme Court, and, finally, in 1945, Secretary of State. As Secretary of State, Byrnes asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation to tap Alger's home telephone.)

SEA
BAYVILLE
FOOD

If my father adopted too harsh an approach to Baruch, he was too indulgent with George Crosley, a man who said he was a free-lance writer covering the committee hearings. Crosley was bright and a good storyteller, but he always needed something—a little money, a car, a place to stay for a few days, a furnished apartment. "I like to help people when they're in trouble," my father has said. But finally, after months of this, he reluctantly concluded that Crosley was a deadbeat, and told him politely that enough was enough.

Thirteen years later, Crosley reappeared in Alger's life, as a witness before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. This time, he used his real name, Whittaker Chambers, and, under oath, began to tell a different story—about how he had originally met my father not in the halls of the Senate but at a meeting of an underground Communist cell. One of the reasons that many people have never fully understood the Hiss case is that even though the heart of the matter is simple—after all, the whole case rests essentially on the assertions of one man—surrounding this simplicity are events and evidence that often seem bafflingly complicated and are hard to keep straight. For instance, Chambers told two contradictory stories under oath in 1948. In the first one, he said that both he and Alger had been Communists, but swore that neither of them had been spies. In the second, he swore that both of them had been Communists *and* spies.

My father was indicted, and eventually convicted and sent to jail, because a grand jury, which at first wanted to indict Chambers for perjury, eventually—at the urging of Richard M. Nixon, then a first-term California representative sitting on the Un-American Activities Committee—decided by a bare majority that Chambers' second story warranted sending my father to trial, even though that story had two witnesses against it: my father's testimony denying both of Chambers' stories, and Chambers' first story. Alger, the man who was indicted

THE HUSTLER DE PARIS

Notre-Dame, Sainte-Chapelle, Sacré-Cœur by foot—
deep in the Louvre the Mona Lisa smirks
at the good tourist who grants her a minute
for each star in the Michelin, then soldiers on.
So all of Paris could be mine?

Quel est le prix d'entrée?
For the price of admission, I can sit in defeat
and view an *arrondissement* from home:
a small-town main street, a gas station
somewhere on a studio back lot. A car

like a loaf of bread pulls up. Two men get out.
One's the young god, Paul Newman,
about to step into a pool hall's gloom
undubbed, only the picket fence
of French subtitles between him and us.

Like a sleepy sexton, the janitor performs
uncalled-for miracles, raising the blinds
to flood the hall with daylight
so dirty it must be divine.
"Like a church," Newman says.

"Church of the Good Hustler."
Even in black-and-white his eyes are blue.
The fair Savior of Western art,
devil too handsome for his own good.
The fat man with a carnation in his lapel
opens his great, soft palms
to receive the ritual talcum,
his the hands of a priest, so dainty, so mechanical.
At midnight he intones the litany of his shots.
Gray bills rain down on the gray felt.

To the gargoyles who watch, it's the old story—
boy hustles anything that moves, even pain.
La petite escourgette to mortify the flesh,
the Crown of Thorns, the Holy Sponge,
un morceau considérable of the True Cross—

that is the smell of money,
of nights just a few thousand old.
Now the saint of the broken thumbs.
"I came to play pool, Fats."
Très bien, Eddie Vite. Combien?

How much the things of this world
have darkened while we were inside.
Even the late light hurts,
the old stone cleaned of the centuries
that we sat through, until it glows.

Just ahead of a last sweep by *les flics*,
street sellers roll up their rugs,
their little "Winged Victories,"
and weave into the nearest throng,
saints without permit passing among us.

—DEBORA GREGER

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by the grand jury, said, in essence, "He is a liar." Chambers, the man who was not indicted, said, in essence, "I am a liar." What was more confusing still, the charges actually brought against my father didn't directly state that he had ever done anything; instead, they called him a liar for saying that nothing had happened. That was because the statute of limitations had run out on any espionage charges. So he was indicted for perjury—the crime that Chambers had already confessed to but was never prosecuted for.

Another factor that makes the Hiss case such a tangle has to do with the time frame involved. Following the indictment, there were two trials—one in 1949 and one extending from later that year into 1950—both of which examined events that were alleged to have taken place in the nineteen-thirties. (The first trial ended in a hung jury; the second ended in Alger's conviction.) But much of what is now known about the case came to light only in the nineteen-seventies, after Nixon's post-Watergate downfall and the passage of strengthening amendments to the Freedom of Information Act. My father then sued to get access to all the material about his case still in government files. This turned out to be a mountain of documents, including such things as the notorious Pumpkin Papers, which Chambers said he had received from my father.

The Pumpkin Papers were four cannisters of 35-mm. film that Chambers hid in a hollowed-out pumpkin on his farm near Westminster, Maryland, one morning in 1948—to keep them away from the Hiss people, he said. They were later turned over to Nixon, who held up two strips of film from one of the cannisters in front of the newsreel cameras and said they were proof of "the most serious series of treasonable activities which has been launched against the government in the history of America." Those two strips of film did have State Department documents on them—papers about trade negotiations with Germany that had never passed through Alger's office, and three cables that had. These documents were introduced at his trials, although none of them could be shown to have come from him. The three other rolls of film weren't talked about—a fact that finally became comprehensible when they were made public, during the Carter Administration. One roll is blank, and two are of photographs of unwanted, never-read, publicly available Navy Department procedural memos. One of the memos is entitled

“Portable Carbon Dioxide Fire Extinguishers—Painting Of.”

WHY did Whittaker Chambers squirrel away these films and other papers and then invent charges against my father? (Although real spies don't leave paper trails pointing straight back to themselves, Chambers also produced copies, excerpts, and summaries of genuine but routine State Department documents that he said my mother had typed for my father on her old Woodstock, and four pencilled notes my father had scribbled for briefing his State Department boss.) It's a very sad story, I think, about a sensitive, probably brilliant man, whose many friends still revere him, more than thirty years after his death, in 1961, at the age of sixty. President Reagan posthumously bestowed on him the Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the President's gift. And Chambers' Maryland farm has been designated a National Historic Landmark. Yet Chambers was a deeply troubled person, who wanted to be important, and who, in his agony, repeatedly befriended men he admired, then turned on them and tried to destroy them. Eventually, he may have taken his own life; the accounts of his death are ambiguous. If Chambers had been a younger man, perhaps some of the pain in his mind might have melted away, and he wouldn't have had to endure so much guilt simply because he found himself attracted both to men and to women. He was also tormented by the suicide of his brother, Richard Chambers, in 1926, and by the thought that Richard might somehow have formed the idea that Whittaker, too, intended to kill himself, and therefore Richard's death could in some sense be described as a suicide pact gone wrong.

I've thought that perhaps Whittaker Chambers felt drawn to my father not because he wanted to be with him but because he wished he could somehow *be* him, and possess his serenity and untroubled outlook. Certainly, some of Chambers' behavior toward my father seems to reinforce this idea. For instance, he originally bought his Maryland farm because my father had once looked at the place and thought of buying it. And Chambers kept in his basement a piece of cloth, dry-cleaned and neatly folded, that once covered an old wing chair in the furnished apartment in Washington that my father had for a short time in 1935 rented to George Crosley.

Many of the facts about Chambers' more bizarre behavior have been publicly available for years, although for a long time few people paid much attention to them. He seemed mesmerized by aliases, and, besides taking the name George Crosley, he called himself, at one time or another, Lloyd Cantwell, George Cantwell, David Breen, Charles Adams, Jay Chambers, J. W. Chambers, David Chambers, David Whittaker Chambers, Jay David Chambers, Jay V. David Chambers, John Kelly, John Land, J. Dwyer, Vivian Dwyer, David Dwyer, and David Whittaker Dwyer. According to “Friendship and Fratricide,” a dual biography of Chambers and my father written twenty-five years ago by a San Francisco psychiatrist named Meyer A. Zeligs, Chambers also suffered from “a deeply ingrained need to accuse others and witness their destruction”—a condition that Zeligs considered part of “the ambulatory illness that harassed him throughout his life.” That illness was diagnosed by Zeligs as paranoia.

Here is one instance of the ambulatory illness, as it was put together by Zeligs: David Zablodowsky, a Columbia College classmate of Chambers' whom Chambers had admired—it's the reason he used David in some of his aliases, according to “Friendship and Fratricide”—told Zeligs that he saw Chambers only twice after leaving school. The first time was twelve or thirteen years after their graduation. “Sometime in 1935 or 1936, out of the blue, I received a call from Chambers,” Zablodowsky related to Zeligs. “He told me he was doing secret work for the Communist Party, and asked me if I would be willing to do him a ‘favor.’ ” Zeligs writes, “Chambers told Zablodowsky that a person of unknown identity would telephone and then leave a sealed letter at his office. This letter would then be picked up by another person, whose identity would also be unknown to him. In short, Zablodowsky agreed to serve as a ‘mail-drop.’ ”

The other time Zablodowsky saw Chambers was in 1939, outside a movie theatre. Chambers said nothing and hurried by. During the Second World War, Zablodowsky served in the Office of Strategic Services, and after the war he landed a job at the United Nations, as director of the Division of Publications of the Department of Conferences and General Services. The job lasted until late 1952, when Whittaker Chambers appeared before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee and said that a United Nations editorial official named

“Antonia, do you mind if I ask if you have any maternal instincts?”

David Zablodowsky had in 1936 been "a member of the Communist underground." The United Nations let Zablodowsky go not long thereafter.

In 1951, shortly before my father began his prison term, in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, he decided to approach this new phase of his life systematically, as if he were a traveller about to embark for an unknown land. He sought out Austin MacCormick, an old New Dealer, who had once been an assistant director of the federal Bureau of Prisons, and asked him what he could expect. MacCormick was very helpful. He predicted, correctly, that Alger would not be given a job in the prison library, because that might lay prison officials open to a charge of "coddling Communists," but would instead be put to work in the storeroom, where, since a guard was always on duty, it could be assumed that he wouldn't play cards or just stand around chatting. My father has written feelingly about his time at Lewisburg in "Recollections of a Life," the memoir he published four years ago. My mother and I used to visit him once a month—each prisoner "earned" two hours of visiting time every month—and he would fill us in on the friends he had made there, telling us, for instance, about a young prizefighter from New York whom he was teaching to read and write, so the man could write a letter to his wife for the first time in his life.

Oddly, I feel as though part of my own mind were still embedded in that old penitentiary, which was supposedly modelled on Hampton Court Palace, although you wouldn't know it to look at it. This is because of the poetic, witty, sad, fascinating letters my father wrote home from jail, three a week—each one a single piece of paper, with writing on both sides and the prison censor's stamp on the front. In order to make me feel like an equal recipient, he always wrote in longhand to my mother and printed the paragraphs that were addressed to me. These included jokes, riddles, often a rebus (sometimes with a translation added below, "because the poor person who has to censor my mail probably needs help, too"), and, best of all, another installment of my favorite yarn, about the Sugar Lump Boy, the friend my father had created for me: he was someone I had to take care of and teach things to, because he was smaller and clumsier than I was.

And my father also made me part of his own life inside the walls, telling me of the doings of men there, and through his words I got to know some of them almost as well as I knew the Sugar Lump Boy.

From a letter dated August 11, 1951: "Do the boys at your summer camp have lots of discussions? Here we have them all the time: about unions and strikes, about religion, about how the world began, about the best baseball team, etc. Right now three fellows beside me are discussing whether the earth is getting smaller or larger. One says volcanoes pile up more mountains, so the earth is getting bigger. Another says the rains and rivers and seas are always washing away mountains and fields and beaches, so it's getting smaller. Every now and then they interrupt my writing to see if I know anything about some point. (We are all nibbling from potato chips and peanuts we jointly chipped in on.) All I know about their subject is that the earth (mankind) is getting better and wiser."

From a letter dated March 11, 1954: "The storeroom has had more spontaneous, roaring laughter in half a year than, I suspect, in all the 20-some years this place has existed. Good, hearty, natural laughter is, as you can imagine, not too common in jail. Yet it is, if anything, more enjoyable here than anywhere else. So, when it comes, it takes complete possession of the laugher like a few cocktails for those who are light drinkers. We laugh until we are weak; the pleasure & the strength of the laughter are quite out of proportion to the humor of the incident. Just because so much of the tension & frustration of imprisonment are no laughing matters, the rocking laugh takes hold until it hurts. The next time you think you hear thunder in the west it is just one of our gales of violent laughter."

"Three years in jail is a good corrective to three years at Harvard," my father once said to me. And he has found life since Lewisburg to be wonderful, complex, and multifaceted. He has more loyal friends than anyone else I've ever known. Several years ago, when his eyesight started to fail, his friends volunteered to read to him, and he now has readers for hours every day. He has been readmitted to the bar in Massachusetts, and has served on the board of a small Arizona foundation. There's an endowed professorship at Bard College called the Alger Hiss Chair. Two films have been made about his life. In 1980, John Lowenthal—the man who this year sought out General Volkogonov and videotaped his statement—made a riveting documentary entitled "The Trials of Alger Hiss." And in 1984 PBS broadcast a docudrama on the case in which Edward Herrmann played Alger.

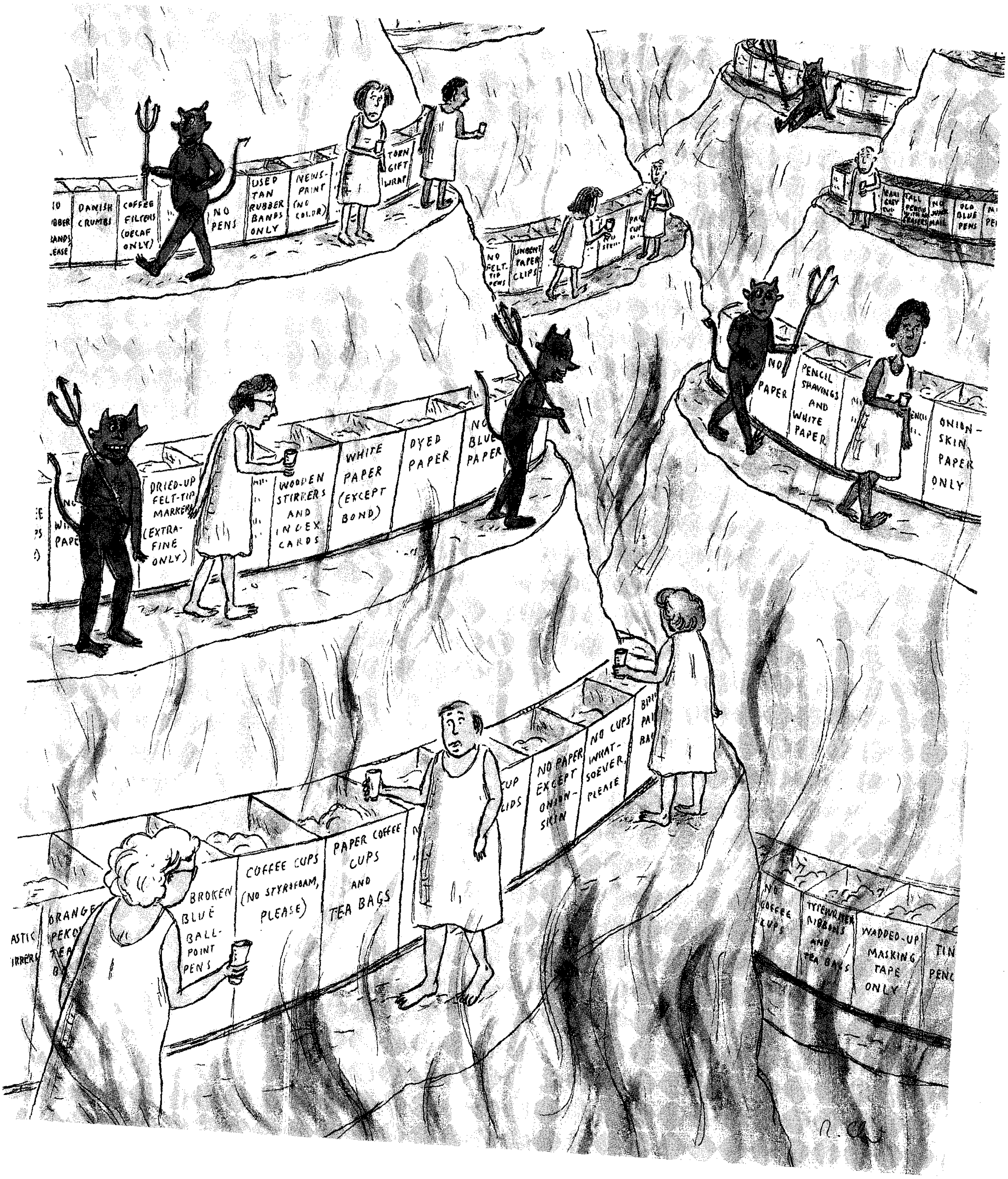
When people have asked me over the years what it has felt like to live through the Hiss case, I've always said that it has been like living inside a fairy tale, with a curse that couldn't be lifted. Many people have been friendly in talking to me about the case, but too often there was someone to pull me aside to say something like "Don't you have doubts? You must have *some* doubts," or "Well, guilty or innocent, your father has paid the penalty. So let's move on," or "We'll never know what really happened, so long ago." Actually, doubts never entered the picture. I know my father and who he is. Besides, my half brother, Timothy Hobson, who was nine when Alger knew George Crosley, said that no one had ever come banging on the door in the middle of the night to collect retyped documents, though Chambers said during the trials that he had done so repeatedly.

Terrorism has a horrible effect on countries, but so, in its own way, does a kind of low-grade fearism. From the end of the Second World War until the fall of the Berlin Wall, people in this country were on edge, partly because of the atomic bomb, and partly because we faced an enemy that seemed capable of clandestinely burrowing inside our minds. Whenever such a situation takes hold of people—and it can happen anywhere—this fear actually does bring about a strange but unnoticed distortion in how people see the world, and see each other. So an honest man can be called, as Alger was, the Benedict Arnold of the twentieth century, and a self-confessed liar can be given the President's highest honor. ♦

ARTIST AT LARGE

RECYCLING IN HELL

by Roz Chast


DANISH CRUMBS
COFFEE FILTERS (DECAF ONLY)
NO PENS
USED TAN RUBBER BANDS ONLY
NEWSPRINT (NO COLOR)
TORN GIFT WRAP
NO FELT-TIP PENS
UNBENT PAPER CLIPS
OLD BLUE PENS
NO JUNK MAIL
NO PAPER
PENCIL SHAVINGS AND WHITE PAPER
ONION-SKIN PAPER ONLY
DRIED-UP FELT-TIP MARKERS (EXTRA-FINE ONLY)
WOODEN STIRRERS AND INDEX CARDS
WHITE PAPER (EXCEPT BOND)
DYED PAPER
NO BLUE PAPER
ORANGE PEKOE TEA BAGS
BROKEN BLUE BALL-POINT PENS
COFFEE CUPS (NO STYROFOAM, PLEASE)
PAPER COFFEE CUPS AND TEA BAGS
CUP LIDS
NO PAPER EXCEPT ONION-SKIN
NO CUPS WHATSOEVER, PLEASE
NO COFFEE CUPS
TYPEWRITER RIBBONS AND TEA BAGS
WADDED-UP MASKING TAPE ONLY
R. Chast

FICTION

FANTASY ROSE

by Allegra Goodman

ROSE is making herself at home. She pads around in bedroom slippers and enjoys the soft, dusty-rose carpet in her granddaughter Miriam's old room. It's her favorite color, and her favorite room in the house.

"We cleared out the top two drawers," Sarah tells her mother-in-law.

"I don't need much space," Rose says, neatly stacking her nightgowns in a corner of the top drawer. "It's such a big bureau."

"It's been through a lot." Sarah looks at the dresser. It had been hers as a child and it's still in great shape, except for the top, where the kids used to keep their fish tank and their fish supplies: purple gravel, glass wool and carbon for the filter, toothbrushes stained algae-green. The fish had been quite a production—especially since they never lasted. The little blue neons would die off in weeks and the angelfish would bite each other and swim around with notches in their fins. By the time Miriam went off to college, there was just one fish left—a great, morose plecostomus that slunk around the bottom of the tank or hung for hours onto the glass with its suction mouth. Miriam's brothers had named it Hoover. Sarah ended up feeding it. "We have to get the top refinished," she says now, looking at the water-damaged wood.

"We should get the whole room redone," Ed puts in from the doorway. "Look at these curtains."

"Faded," Sarah says. The pink curtains are almost white now.

"Faded! They've shrunk." Ed tugs at one of them and laughs. "They're getting smaller and smaller. They're absurd. Where did we get these—Woolworth's?"

"No—it was that place, Wigwam."

"Right!" Ed snaps his fingers. "Wigwam. That was before they became Cost-Less." He turns to his mother. "We're going to redo this whole room."

"Why?" Rose asks. "It doesn't need anything but new curtains. I could sew you a pair of curtains."

"No, no. No, thanks, Ma." Rose hasn't sewn since she was seventy-five, and when she did sew, her shortcuts were legendary. She made dresses with asymmetrical necklines and blouses with one sleeve longer than the other. She whipped up a pair of pants without a fly for one grandson, and for the girls she made doll clothes that didn't come off. She just sewed the clothes onto the dolls.

"It's my favorite room in the house," Rose says. She sinks down on the bed.

"We call it the shrine." Sarah gestures at the paraphernalia that her daughter Miriam has left behind. There are the stuffed animals lined up neatly on top of the bookcase. There is the mineral collection and the rusting music stand—a purple rabbit's-foot key chain hangs from it. There are the dolls representing different countries. They are all actually from China. The souvenir collection from the family's summer at Oxford—a series of English and Scottish guard dolls, some headless, some with heads toppling. They all have weak necks. "We were going to redo it when she went to college."

"Then she went to medical school," Ed says.

"And then she got engaged," adds Sarah.

"It's time."

"It's time," Sarah agrees.

Rose shakes her head. "You were never a sentimentalist, Ed." She smooths down the tulle skirt of the Madame Alexander bride doll.

ROSE is staying with them for ten days. She flew in from Venice, California, after her dear friend Eileen Meeker passed on. The shock was terrible. Eileen was supposed to come over for brunch on Sunday at eleven o'clock. Eleven came and Eileen did not. Rose walked over to 7-B. She stood on the landing and pounded on the door. "Meeker!" she screamed, because Eileen was hard of hearing, although too stubborn to admit it. "Meeker!" Not a sound. It was up to Rose to alert the staff. Then Rose watched Eileen's nephew sell off all her possessions. Just one week later they moved in poor Juliet Frazier with her companion, and now Rose is left to watch them wheel her up and down, poor thing. Frazier doesn't know whether she is coming or going. Rose is very, very happy to be in Foggy Bottom with Ed and Sarah. She cried when they met her at the airport. "I've been so miserable!" she told them. "I've been so ill."

"We'll take you to Dr. Maltzman," Sarah said.

"No, no, it's my stomach."

Ed looked at Sarah. "It's those pills. You know they're bad for your digestion. You have to cut back on the pills."

"I have been cutting back," Rose told them, "except when the pain is too much for me. The pain is what I can't take, and only the pills will do for the pain."

"Yeah, well, we've been through that before," Ed said.

"Of course I can't live there any longer," Rose tells them at dinner that night. "Not after what happened."

"You'll feel better in a few days," Ed says.

Rose stares at him. She puts down her fork. Sometimes she thinks her son has no heart.

Sarah changes the subject. "There is a movie I wanted to see. The writing workshop at school is showing 'Waiting for the Moon.' I thought we could all go on Sunday."

"Yeah, fine," Ed says. "You want to go, Ma?"

"If I can, I'll go," Rose says.

Ed gives Sarah a look. Sarah frowns back in warning.

"It was a terrible thing the way they treated her," Rose says. "They came in and they liquidated her apartment. I watched them. In and out, in and out they carried her things. Her most precious possessions. For years she dusted. In the end, what was the difference? She had no roots there. They just wheeled in

Juliet Frazier. I said to them before I left that they could look for another tenant for number 3-C."

"What?" Ed says.

"I gave them notice. I said, Look around for someone new, because what happened to Meeker isn't going to happen to me. But be sure to tell your prospective tenant about the thermostat in the oven and the TV reception. Warn her she'd better be prepared to fork up for an exterior antenna. I said, My son Henry brought me here when he was working for the gallery in Westwood, but he's gone now, in England, and has been living there for years. Now he's settled and married in Oxford. My younger son lives in Washington. My grandchildren are in the East. I don't need to stay in Venice—in *dr'erd auffn deck* on the West Coast. This is not where I'm going to finish my eighties, where my dearest friend is left alone to drop dead in front of the television."

"Oh, Ma," Ed says. "Don't cry. It's late, and you're exhausted. You've been through a long, long flight and you need to rest."

Rose puts her hand in his. "In the winter I'll stay with you, and in the summer I'll visit Henry. I love Oxford in the summer. It isn't humid there like Washington. It isn't unbearably hot like it is here."

"What are you saying?" gasps Ed. "You're completely settled in Venice. You have all your furniture there just the way you like it! You have your friends at the center!"

"How would you like it if you had to spend all your time with old, sick people?" Rose asks. Her voice is stern, her gray eyes plaintive.

"No, we're not doing this now," Ed says. "We're not going to discuss this."

"I want to call Henry," Rose tells Sarah.

"He's asleep. It's the middle of the night there."

"I'll call him later tonight, when it's morning in England. I'll be up in the night. I'll call from downstairs."

"Why don't we call him on the weekend?" Sarah suggests. "We'll have more time—and you'll feel better. Don't you want to finish your dinner?" Rose is standing up from the table.

"No. Thank you, dear. It was very good."

"Do you want some coffee? Decaffeinated?"

"No, thank you. I might come down for some later. I haven't been sleeping at night."

ED can't sleep, either. He never sleeps well when Rose is staying with them, and now he lies in bed thinking about her plans to leave Venice and come East. "Sarah," he whispers.

She sighs and turns over.

"Sarah, she's going to move in with us."

Sarah doesn't answer.

"She's not going to move in with us, is she? Sarah?"

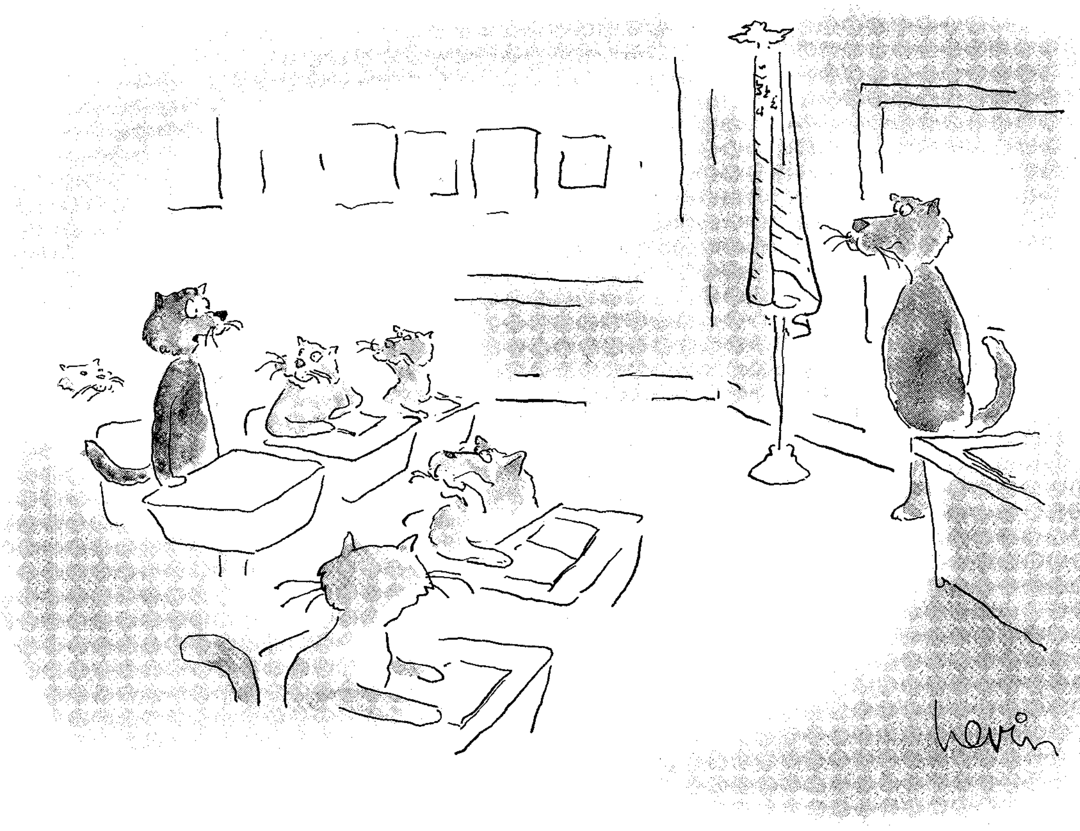
"No," Sarah answers suddenly. "Go back to sleep."

He lies there and looks out into the dark room. He stares at the dim crack of light between the bottom of the shade and the windowsill. Tomorrow he has to teach, but he's thinking about his mother, feeling that she is now going to stay with them in their house—that she is going to live with them. He knows she is lonely and bored. He wants to give her some companionship. To take care of her. It's the thought of doing all this that fills him with panic. It has nothing to do with her age. It's that she makes him nervous. At long stretches she drives him crazy. She has too much power over him. He hears her now as she pads down the hall to the bathroom. It's three-twelve in the morning. She is taking a hot shower. He listens as the water pours on and on. It is the longest shower he has ever heard. He hears her shaking her medicine bottles. She is taking her pills. She took some after dinner, of course, because he upset her. That isn't completely true. She would have taken them anyway. He feels guilty all the same. He imagines she'll go down to the kitchen and try to call Henry. Does she have his office number? Ed nudges Sarah's shoulder. "I can't sleep."

"Go to sleep," she replies distantly, like an echo.

"Sarah."

After a moment she speaks to him in a rapid, clear voice. "Don't be ridiculous. She is not going to move in; she just



"The dog ate my homework."

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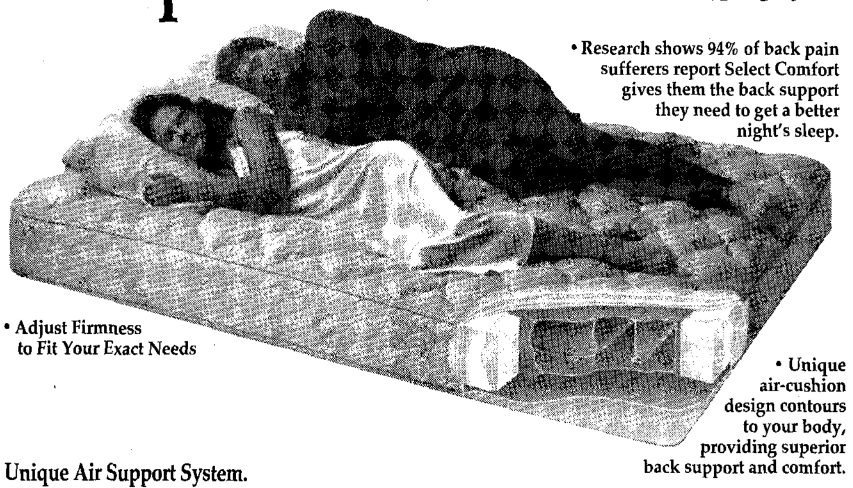

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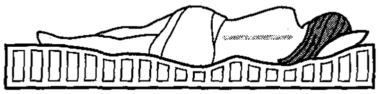

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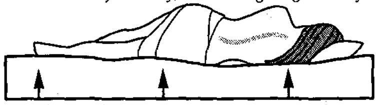

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wants to feel wanted and she'll have a big fight with you tomorrow and refuse to live here. So calm down and go back to sleep." She turns toward the wall with most of the quilt wrapped around her, and Ed lies alone under the white sheets, listening to the slight creak of the stairs.

HIS lectures go badly that week. It's only the second week of the semester, and he sees that students are dropping out. He blames his poor performance for the dwindling enrollment. It was always a popular class in the past—Terrorism and Conflict Resolution—and he's known at Georgetown as something of a showman. "Energetic and full of insight," the student guide summed up in its evaluation. "Markowitz spices his lectures with lurid details of covert operations all over the Middle East. The slide lecture on the World's Most Wanted is a must-see, and the open discussion 'Friend or Foe?' also rates high marks." But Ed is flat this week. He comes in to school worn out from lack of sleep, from listening to Rose as she walks around the house at night, from watching her as she nods off during the day in the living room. When Ed comes home she doesn't bring up her idea about moving in. She looks up at him and talks in a lazy, druggy voice. She is taking her pills. She's got the orange bottles stashed away in Miriam's room and she is taking them every few hours. An opium eater among the stuffed animals.

Sarah was wrong that he and Rose would fight. They haven't fought at all. It's Ed and Sarah who have been fighting all week. "How am I supposed to get any work done?" Sarah demands. "I work at home. This is my office. How can I write when she comes in and talks my ear off about herself and her symptoms—"

"It was your idea to have her visit," Ed says.

"Because it was the right thing to do! Because she was bereft of her friend!"

"Bereft?"

"*Bereft!*"

They face each other over the kitchen table.

"I said this was a bad time," Ed tells Sarah. "You insisted—"

"It's not a question of timing. You are leaving me to bear the entire responsibility. Sometimes you stay in your office until six while I am here making dinner with her *watching* me! Then you keep me up at night."

"Sarah, I can't sleep because I'm tense! My head is pounding. You don't understand what I'm going through. You have no idea how nervous I am—"

"You sound just like her." Sarah stamps out, nearly running down Rose in the hall.

Rose seems to take more pills each day. Either she is taking more or Ed is watching more closely. He hears her rattling in the bathroom at night. He watches her steal off to her room to take them. They send her spinning into reveries and long family stories in which she scrambles generations. In her accounts she is always the child or the niece, younger than everyone else. Always, strangely, an only child. She can't seem to remember herself as a sister or a cousin. In memory she stands alone as the only member of her generation, just as she stands alone now. It alarms Ed. He corrects her sharply, and Sarah hisses at him later over the dinner dishes. "Let it go! What's the difference?"

"The difference? She's taking drugs!"

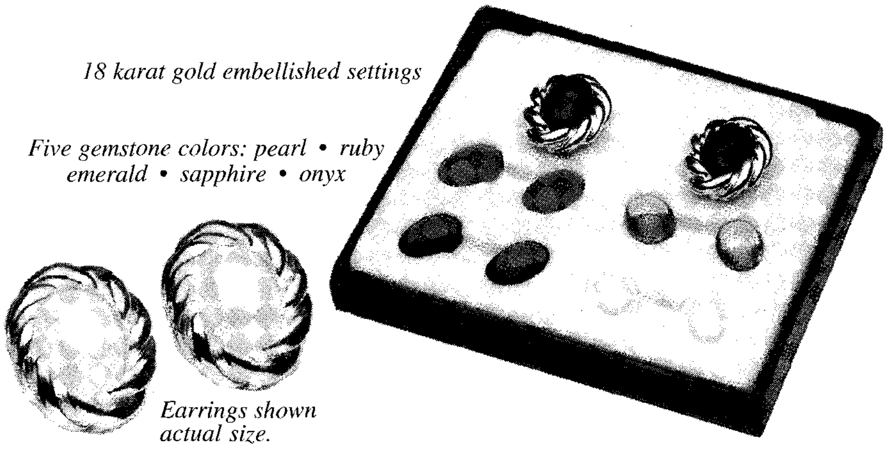
"What are you going to do? She's eighty-five."

"This is not eighty-five speaking. This is enforced feeblemindedness. Synthetic senility!" He lowers his voice. "And she's doing it to get back at me. Because I didn't invite her to move in with us."

"Oh, she is not, Ed. She is not getting back at you. You've always got a conspiracy theory. Why don't you just work on being a better sport?"

ON Sunday they go to see the movie at Georgetown. It's a rambling film about Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. The kind of film that glides from one old country house to the next and hovers over fields in the South of France, lingering on the remains of picnics. It's the kind of film Ed secretly hates because it doesn't go anywhere. Just stews in its own juices. In this kind of film the vintage cars are more interesting than the characters.

Sarah is enjoying herself, though, and Ed is glad, because she deserves something for putting up with him—and with Rose—all week. Late-afternoon sun, and then moonlight, suffuses the movie screen. Gertrude and Alice sit in silence looking at each other. "What is the an-



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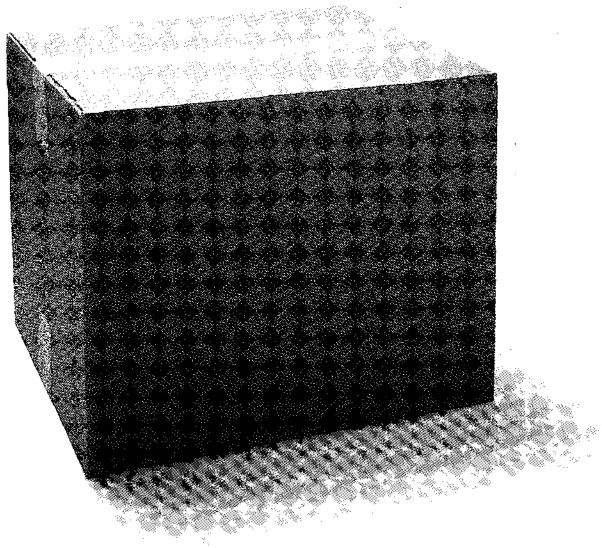

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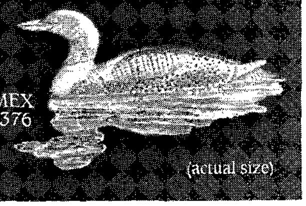

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swer?" Alice asks at last. There is a long pause. Ed glances at his watch and looks up just in time to see Rose slumping in her seat. "Ma?" he whispers. "Ma? Sarah? What happened?"

"We need an ambulance," Sarah says, as the three other audience members turn around. "Pull her up. We have to get to a phone."

"No, don't move her!" Ed cries.

"O.K., wait with her while I call."

He looks down at his mother collapsed in her seat, breathing ever so slightly in the flickering moonlight of the movie.

They follow the ambulance in their car, and at the emergency room Ed tells his story at least four times.

"She just fell forward in the theatre," he tells the triage nurse. They are wheeling Rose in on a gurney.

Sarah is carrying Rose's purse, a massive black wedge of a bag with short, round handles. "I think this could have something to do with it." She hands the nurse two of Rose's orange prescription bottles of Percodan.

THAT night Ed lies in bed imagining tiny sounds, tricking himself into hearing the stairs creak and the cabinets close—as if the house could twitch by itself, and the floorboards could have pins and needles. Rose is in the hospital for tests, and the doctor is concerned.

"She overdosed on the Percodan," Dr. Ing explained. "She must have lost count."

"She's been taking it for years," Ed said.

"Oh, yes, she's addicted to it."

Ed hated Ing for saying that. He felt his face burning there in the office.

"I have to call Henry," Ed says now to Sarah, who lies awake beside him.

"I thought you were going to call him in the morning."

"No, no," Ed groans. "I'm going to worry about it all night." It has to be done. He has to call his brother, who is hard enough to talk to under normal circumstances. His Anglophile brother, the collector and obsessive chef, the Laura Ashley manager in Oxford. The publisher of bleak poetry books in tiny editions.

"So call him." Sarah takes the phone from the nightstand and lays it on his chest.

"I don't have his number up here. I've got to go down to the kitchen and get the Rolodex." Ed heaves himself out of bed and thumps down the stairs. After a moment Sarah struggles up, puts on Ed's bathrobe, and goes after him.

They sit at the kitchen table, which is strewn with the remains of the *Times*, and one of Ed's yellow legal pads with a list of things to do, and a cluster of blackening bananas. Sarah has been meaning to make banana bread. "Hello, Henry?" Ed calls into the receiver. "Hello? We've got a terrible connection. It's Ed."

"Good God, what's the matter?" Henry cries on the other end. Ed's jaw tightens. It's true that he almost never calls his brother, but it offends him that Henry should assume some disaster has occurred the minute he hears Ed's voice. And, of course, assume it with that surreal British accent. All Henry's Briticisms seem to come out of books, and now, as Ed speaks, Henry's gasps of horror have a Dickensian quality—with subtle Brooklyn harmonics. "Gracious heavens," Henry exclaims. "Oh, poor Mother! Poor Mother. What are we going to do?"

"I don't know," Ed says grimly. "There isn't much we *can* do."

"Oh, God," Henry says.

"Look, can you get Susan?" Ed glares at the bananas on the table as he waits for Henry's wife to come on the line. Then he picks them up and throws them into the kitchen garbage. They land with a satisfying thump.

"Hello, Ed? Susan here." Her clipped voice soothes him.

"You heard what I said? I think you'd better send Henry out here."

"Yes, of course," Susan says. "We'll book him a flight today, and I'll ring you with his arrival information."

Ed feels much better when he hangs up. "She's one in a million," he tells Sarah.

BY the time Henry arrives, Rose is home from the hospital. She was there for three days—unconscious part of the time. But then she came to, and she left the hospital, frail but radiant, a bunch of helium balloons from the grandchildren tied to the back of her wheelchair. "She has an amazing constitution for a woman her age," the doctor told Ed. "There is absolutely nothing wrong with her—except that she's taking massive doses of Percodan."

"So let's get her off it," Ed said.

"You'd have to get her into a clinical detox program," the doctor told him. "This is not something you should try at home."

Rose is recovering in Miriam's room. No one has mentioned a detox program. No one has mentioned when she will be going home. She lies on the pink twin bed and reads Danielle Steel, Belva Plain, and Andrew Greeley. Henry, after his first transports, has collapsed, exhausted with jet lag and stress, in the boys' room. He had laid out his silk pajamas on the bottom bunk and hung his clothes in the closet that Ben and Avi shared before they went off to college. Ed feels as though he is the last adult left in the world.

When he comes home Friday evening, the kitchen is a disaster area. Rose sits at the table behind a pile of vegetables. Bags of them. Little yellow cherry tomatoes, radishes, curly red-fringed lettuce dripping in the colander. "Henry and Sarah are collaborating on dinner," she tells Ed. She is positively glowing among those vegetables. She looks happier than she has in years. There are grocery bags all over the counters, flecks of carrot peel on the floor. Henry has worked himself into one of his cooking frenzies. Flushed with exertion, he stands over a tray of hollowed-out oranges. He is piping sweet potato into each one with a pastry tube. Rose is beaming, and Ed can't help smiling to see it. "There's nothing like sitting in the kitchen with the family," she says. "If you had to cook in what they give us for kitchens at Live Oak! It's a disgrace."

"You never liked cooking," Ed points out, kissing her on the cheek.

"No, I never did like cooking, myself," Rose admits. "But I like a kitchen with cooking going on in it. I like to be with the family. These kitchenettes at Live Oak aren't built for cooking. Not at all. And outdated! Decorated in green! The Frigidaire is green."

Henry looks up from his orange shells. "I think the gaskets are going on yours, Ed." He points to Ed's refrigerator.

"Yeah, I know. The house needs work," Ed says.

"It's a lovely house," Henry rushes to add. "These row houses are charm-

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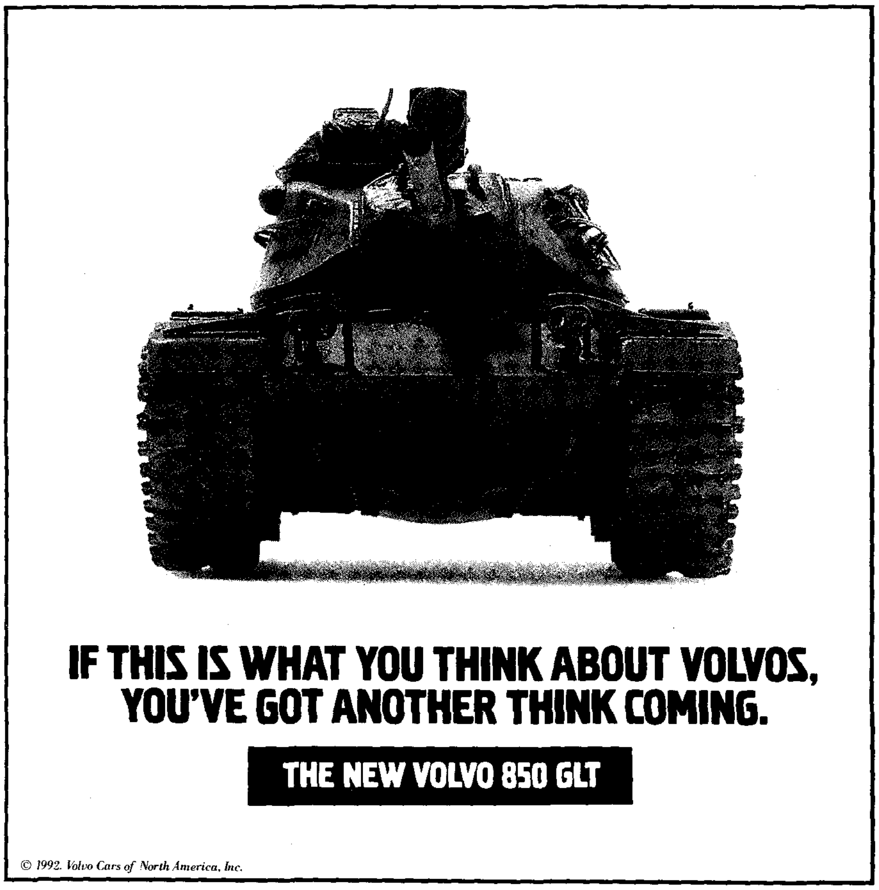
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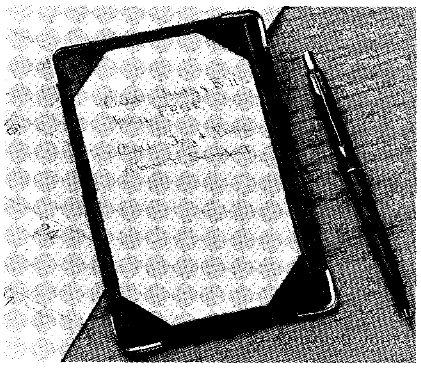

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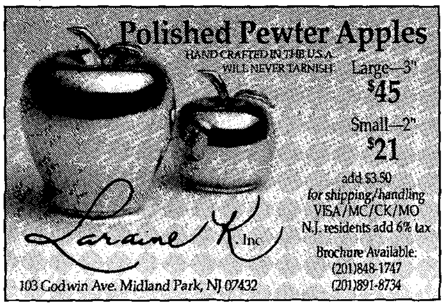

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ing. You could plant a little ivy by the door. Repaint. You could make it look like Georgetown.

"Ed!" he bursts out, suddenly. "What's the time? My challahs! Hold this." He hands Ed the pastry tube and rushes to check on the bread. Sarah stands at the stove dropping matzo balls into the chicken soup. Steam rises in her face. "It's such a pity you don't have a double oven," Henry sighs. "How will we get it all in? Susan says I'm terribly spoiled, and she won't let me get a convection oven." He wipes his hands on the ridiculous little checkered apron he has wrapped around his waist. "But the one implement I refuse to buy—absolutely *refuse*—is the microwave. I cannot reconcile cooking with radiation. It's unnatural. They say it doesn't brown the food. And, of course, you can't bake in a contraption that won't crisp. You don't get a crust. That's what I've been told, in any case. I won't touch them."

Ed comes up behind Sarah. "How are you?" he asks her. He kisses the back of her head.

"Stop that!" she snaps. She opens the oven door to check on her cake.

"Oh dear," Rose observes from the table. "Your cake has fallen."

"That's true," Sarah says, and she slams the oven door shut.

Henry whirls around, startled by the noise. "What will we do?" he cries. "Oh, I know what we should do. Make a fruit compote and cover it. Make a trifle. What fruit do we have?" He rummages in the grocery bags.

"I love trifle," Rose says. "We had trifle in England. I grew on trifle. I was such a little thing when they brought me out. Such a weak little thing. But when they gave me the trifle I blossomed out. How I blossomed out! With the cream on top. That heavy cream—"

"Oh," Henry gasps. "We didn't get cream. We'll have to run out and buy—"

"How I blossomed out," Rose says again. "My girth and my English grew equally. We weren't thin little things when we were Miriam's age."

"Would you get some cream, Ed?" asks Henry.

"No." Ed sinks into a chair.

"It's just that I can't leave the challahs," Henry says.

"Who would have thought," Rose muses, "that cream, which just melts on the tongue, can instantly turn into pounds."

"I don't think we can make trifle without cream," says Henry.

"Fine," says Ed. "Don't."

Rose looks over at Sarah. "I wasn't thin when I was Miriam's age. Is she still so thin? All my life I've had a passion for sweets. And for affection," she adds thoughtfully.

"Are you upset?" Henry asks Ed.

"No," Ed snaps back. "I am not upset."

"Sarah," Rose says. "I would like to do just one thing."

"Yes?"

"Because I've really been at death's door."

"What do you want to do?"

"Go to the synagogue tomorrow. Together—with the whole family."

"YOU didn't tell me it was going to be Indian summer," Henry moans in the back seat of the car. He is sweating in his new fall suit, wondering if he should mop his brow with the blue silk handkerchief so beautifully folded in his breast pocket. "I don't think the air-conditioner is reaching back here." Sarah looks back at him and feels some sympathy. He's gained weight since his wedding. His face is puffy in the heat, his brown eyes mournful. She and Ed haven't been to Congregation Shaarei Tzedek in months. It surprised her that Ed agreed to go.

"Why don't we ever come anymore?" Ed asks Sarah as he puts on a white satin yarmulke and steps into the sanctuary. "I forget. What was our excuse?"

During the service he remembers. Under the roar of the bellowing cantor comes a soft murmur of kibitzing. As the thin little rabbi delivers his sermon, the talking seems to grow louder. Ed tries to read some prayers to himself in the English. "How precious is your kindness, O God!" Ed reads. "The children of men and women take refuge in the shadow of your wings."

"New Haven," he hears on his left. "They're going to live in New Haven. I'm worried sick."

"The crime."

"It's terrible."

"We are divided within ourselves," the rabbi says from the bimah. "We are torn, and we *should* be torn. And yet—no, all the more—we love Israel."

"But that's where Yale Law School *is*," says the woman on Ed's left.

"The campus is beautiful."

"Beautiful."

"You give them drink of your stream of delights," Ed reads.

"Just eight-fifty a month," the concerned mother says. "But parking is going to be a problem." Ed shuts his book.

He is in a terrible mood by the time they get home. Sarah climbs upstairs and lies down with the air-conditioner on high, but Ed paces around the house in his T-shirt and slacks. He looks into Miriam's room, where Rose lies on the bed, reading. Her short gray hair is brushed up from her forehead in a wave. He strides down to the living room, where Henry slouches on the couch.

"Let's go for a walk, Edward," Henry suggests.

"Too hot," Ed grunts.

"I was thinking this is an opportunity," Henry says. "We hardly ever see each other. I'd like to walk around the university. I saw the most marvellous stand there yesterday—selling ices."

They walk the narrow streets below Georgetown. Henry wears sunglasses and one of Ed's polo shirts pulled taut over his belly. He buys Ed a chocolate soda at the green Bella Italia wagon. He himself sips a wild strawberry, and they stride down the sidewalk together. Henry is appalled at the dearth of bookstores, intrigued by the cutwork parasols in a vintage-clothing store. "I wish Susan liked this sort of thing." He casts a critical eye at the Laura Ashley window display. "Cluttered," he decides. "I would never allow my staff to clutter like that."

"What did you think of Congregation S.T.?" Ed asks.

"Not bad. Not bad at all. Except for that ghastly Holocaust Memorial. The air-conditioning was splendid."

"I meant—you know—spiritually," Ed says.

Henry looks at him, questioning. "What do you mean?"

"I don't know," Ed says. "Every once in a while I go there sort of expecting something. I mean, sometimes I feel like I'm in a crisis. Sometimes I want to go and hear some words of wisdom from the rabbi. But I just end up sitting with those ladies with the jewelry."

"What do you mean, 'crisis'?"

"It's not specific—"

"You can tell me," Henry says. "Be-

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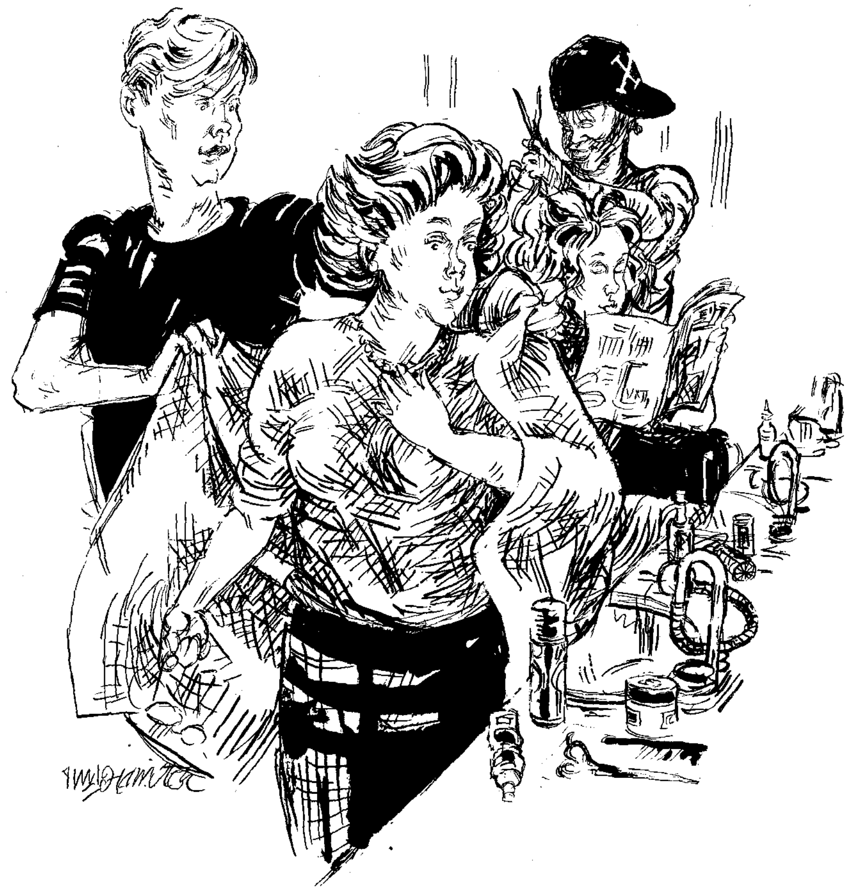

"This is more than a look. This is a context."

• •

lieve me, this is something I know about."

Ed walks on, looking at the sidewalk. It's true, he thinks. Henry's been in analysis how many years? He's worked on his psyche laboriously. Stripped down and redecorated in layers. Draped himself with cultures and collections. Developed the most complicated persona possible—the expatriate Brooklyn Jew in Oxford. The unaffiliated scholar and aesthete working as businessman in the ancient university town. Henry has made himself at home in contradictions. Meanwhile, he, Ed, is completely at sea. At a loss.

"Is it Mother? You're worried about her?"

"Oh, partly, but it's not just that. It's the way the time is going. The way she's getting. The way the kids are getting. The generations are sort of flipping over. I think," Ed says slowly, "it would be very comforting to believe in God. Just for some sense of permanence. The stability. I think I would like to believe in God."

"You? Never!" Henry laughs.

"Why not?" demands Ed.

"Because you're a pragmatist and you always have been," Henry says.

"No, see, I know what it would take," Ed says. "I know what could convince me. If you showed me a miracle, for example."

"One miracle? Oh, Edward, if we saw a miracle you would either find some explanation or say it was a fluke."

"No. I could be convinced. Under the right conditions I could. Look at these analytic philosophers—these positivists—discovering God now that they're old and gray. I heard that A. J. Ayer on his deathbed actually lay there and said all his work was a lie and he actually did believe in the divine and in the immortality of the soul—and that it was possible to make ethical and aesthetic judgments. A few hours later he came out of it, though. Said he'd just panicked, and denied it all."

"Well, that's good," Henry says.

"Why?"

"Because it would have been so terribly sad for him to lose everything he believed in just like that. His life's work in sense-perception. Everything he stood for as an atheist."

They walk along in silence. Ed pokes with his straw at the ice in the bottom of his cup. "The last two weeks have been bad," he says. "I'm not getting any work done. I'm not sleeping at night. I just lie awake thinking. Things will never be the same with Ma."

"She doesn't seem so different to me," Henry says. "Whenever I visit it strikes me how things are moving along so smoothly—in the same comforting old ways."

"What old ways? What are you talking about?" asks Ed. Can't Henry see that the house is splitting apart? "Miriam is getting married. Mother has decided to move in with us—"

"I've always looked to you and Sarah as constants," Henry says, "while I've gone through all the turmoil and changes in my life."

Ed just stands stock-still in the middle of the sidewalk, because Henry never ceases to amaze him. Constants! he wants to scream. The universe is expanding. The continents are sliding. The kids are shooting off from the house like comets, and he and Sarah are turning fifty-four in their wake. In the trails of dolls and old clothes they leave behind; in the dust of their mineral collections. "I just feel, when I'm talking to you and to Ma, that the time is getting bent," he says finally. "That things are bent out of proportion. All I want is for things to be normal. Where the kids are kids and Ma would be an adult, and the generations would be sort of in order. Henry, will you stop touching me!" He shakes off Henry's hand. "I hate it when you do that. The thing is, if Ma moves in with us I'll have a nervous breakdown. I know it makes her happy, living in that pink room, but it's too weird for me. I just can't take it if I'm supposed to be her father. And there is just no possible way to talk to her about it. How can you tell your mother something like that? There is no way in the world I can sit down and explain the situation to her." The brothers stand there blocking the sidewalk. Unconsciously, each rattles the melting ice in his cup.

Meanwhile, at home, Sarah is explaining the situation to Rose. "Mother," she says, "we all have very different personalities. Very different routines. You have your own life in Venice and your own net-

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work. Your doctor, your friends. Here in Washington you'd be completely isolated. You wouldn't have the support staff, the activities, the, uh, backup nurses."

Rose looks up desolately from the pink bed and Sarah shifts in Miriam's desk chair, knees knocking the underside of the desk.

"I don't have roots in Venice," Rose says.

"But you've lived there ten years," Sarah reminds her. "And we can't provide you with what you have there. Not without giving up our jobs. That's why I'm calling the travel agent."

Rose is crying softly on the bed, and Sarah comes over to her and puts her arms around her. "But you're coming back in June," she says. "Won't that be lovely, when you come back for Miriam's wedding?"

Rose thinks about it. "I could go on to England," she says.

Sarah hesitates a moment. Then she nods, feeling only slightly evil. "That's right," she tells Rose. "You can visit Henry and Susan in their cottage."

"The Cotswolds," Rose sighs. "Everything will be blooming."

"The heat never gets so bad there," Sarah says.

"That's true. They don't have that humidity. Your humidity is unbearable." She reminds Sarah of Ben's July bar mitzvah, when the air-conditioning failed in the Social Hall and she was nearly overcome by the heat. "I will never forget it. *Never.*" Her voice trembles with laughter, even though she is still crying.

HENRY returns to England. Rose flies back to California. The Sunday after Rose leaves, Ed and Sarah drive to J. C. Penney to look for miniblinds for Miriam's room. "We'll get the toys into boxes," Ed says as they walk through the store.

"And we'll have to replace the carpet," adds Sarah.

"Why? What's wrong with it? We spent good money on that carpet."

"I thought the color—"

"I like the color. It's a very nice color for a guest room."

"Well, it's not going to go with miniblinds." Sarah trails her fingers down the plastic slats on display.

"So let's get some curtains. That's what I said in the first place."

"But they have to go with dusty rose."

"Fine."

A saleswoman finds them studying the white Battenberg curtains. "May I help you?"

"Well, Phyllis," Ed says, reading her nametag. "We're looking for something forty-five by fifty."

"That's the window size?" Phyllis asks.

"Yeah."

"And what kind of room would this be?"

"A bedroom," Sarah says. "Sort of a girl's room."

Phyllis nods. "How old is the girl?"

"Twenty-three," Ed says.

"She doesn't live at home." Sarah feels silly. "She's at Harvard Med."

"Actually, she's getting married in June."

"Congratulations."

"Thank you," Ed says. "We're turning it into a guest room, but we want it to sort of—go with what we have in there already."

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"It's a dusty-rose room," Sarah explains.

"Let me show you what we have." Phyllis leads them to a window display.

"Mmm," Ed hums uncertainly.

"Then we have this with the eyelet ... "

"No, no." Ed grimaces at Sarah. "What's that by the wall?" he asks. "That's not bad."

"This is new," Phyllis says.

"That's very pretty," says Sarah.

"It's called Fantasy Rose," Phyllis tells them. "It's got the over-all rose print in blush, gray, and cream in fifty-fifty cotton-poly. You've got the valance here, and the swag—" She fluffs out the material. "And then here's your basic tier. You use two curtain rods."

"That would look beautiful with the carpet," Sarah says as she and Ed talk it over by the water fountain. "If you're sure you don't want to replace the carpet."

"We're not replacing the carpet," Ed says. "I'm not spending a thousand dollars to replace a perfectly good carpet."

THAT evening after they hang the curtains, Sarah drags the telephone into Miriam's room, lies down on the bed, and calls Cambridge. "Hello, Miriam?" she says. "This is Mom. I'm calling from the shrine. We just put up the most beautiful curtains. They're pink with sort of gray and cream. I know. I know. Ed! You can pick up the phone. I got her."

"Ow, you're screaming in my ear," Ed says from the kitchen. "Hi, baby. Everyone's gone home. We got you these pink curtains. They're beautiful. They're ridiculous. It's going to be a guest room for when you and Jon come down. We're going to get a convertible sofa."

"You could have a baby girl," Sarah says, "and she could sleep here when you come visit."

"You could just come down by yourself when you finish Anatomy," Ed says, sticking to the near future. ♦

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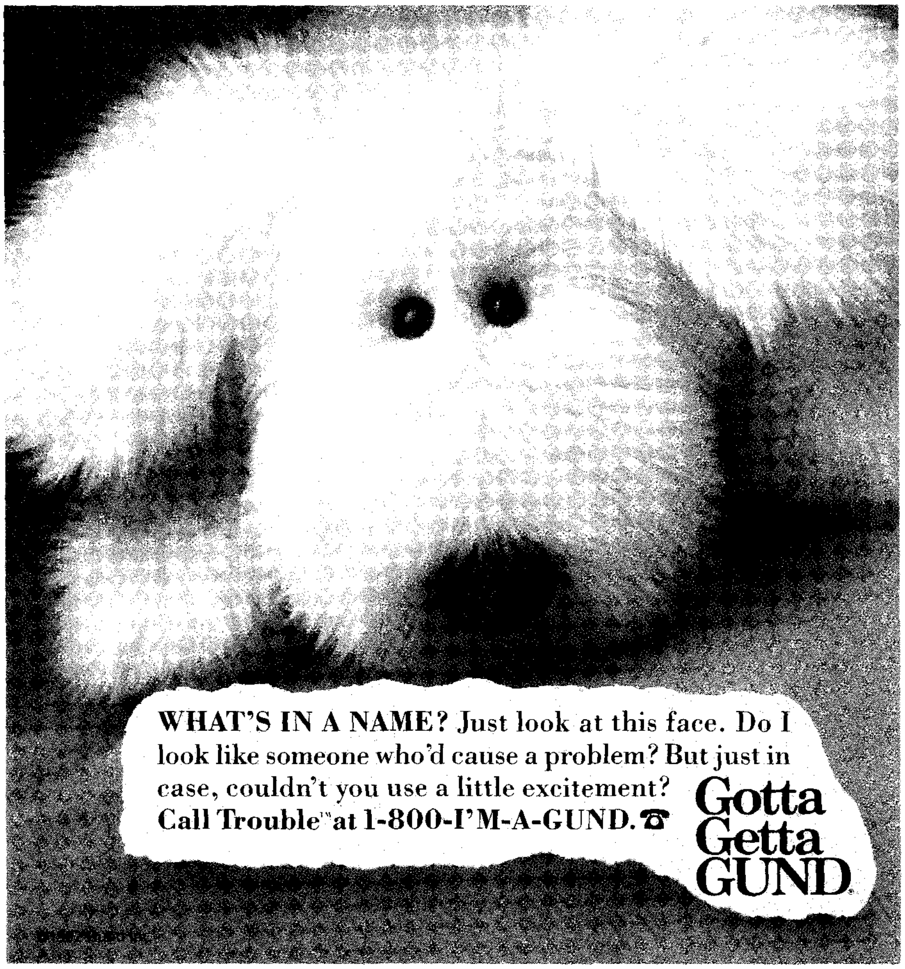

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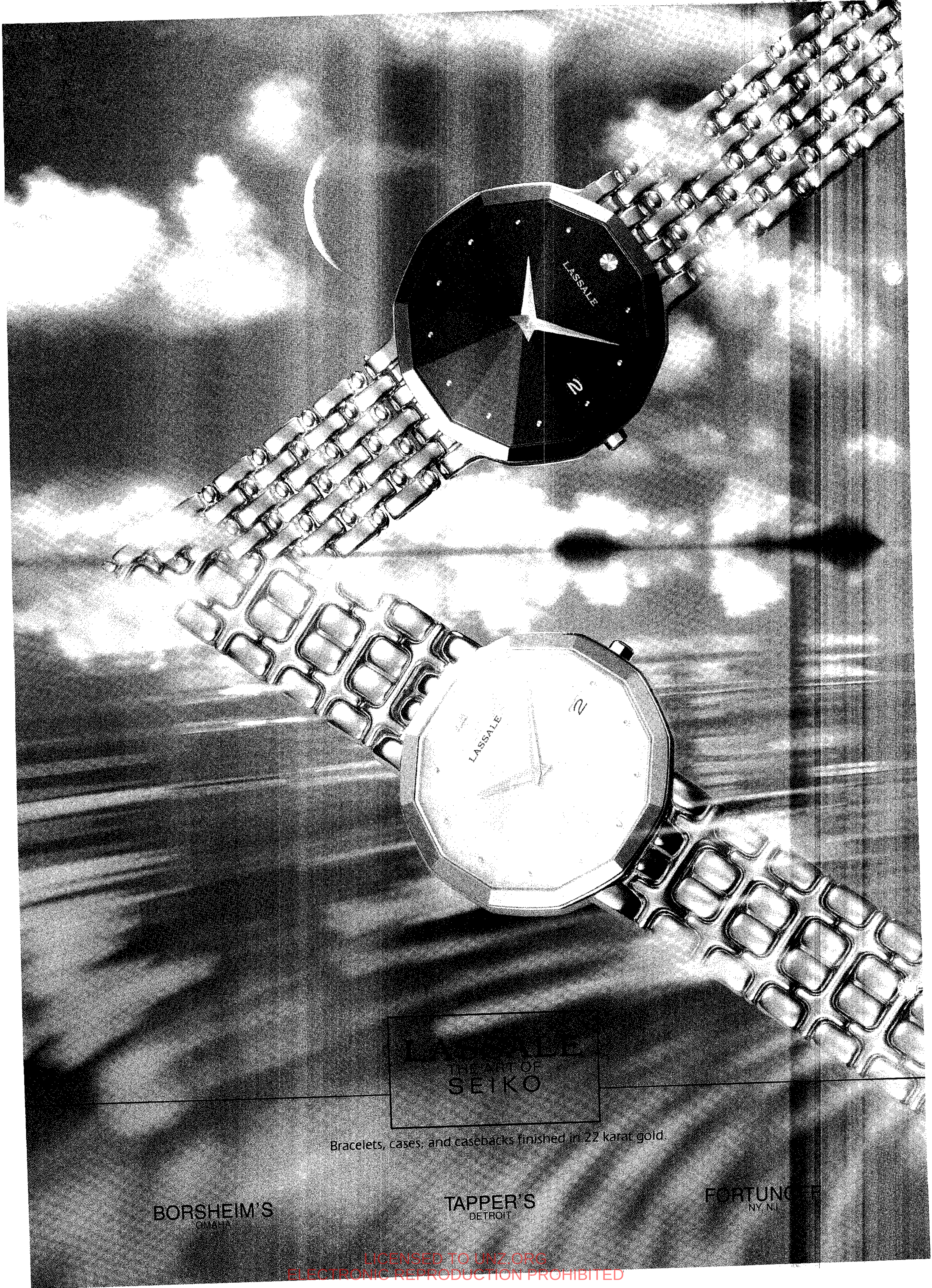
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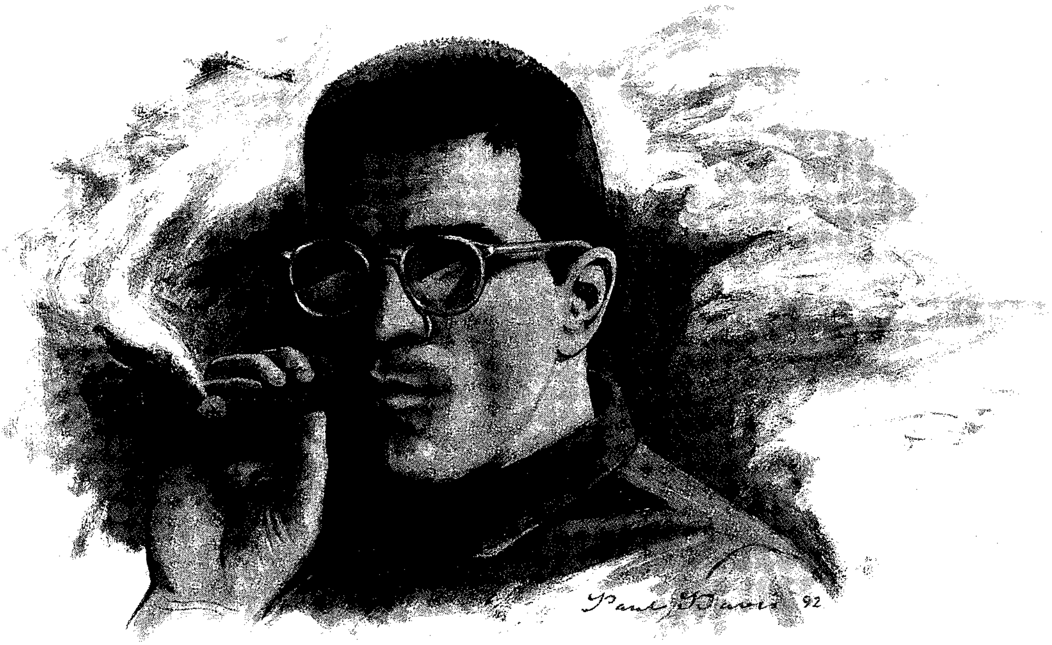
DOGMA DAYS

by John Lahr

DAVID MAMET understands that envy is the gasoline on which a competitive society runs, and no modern American playwright has been bolder or more brilliant in analyzing its corrosive social effects. In his most recent play, "Oleanna," at the Orpheum, Mamet returns to this theme but stages it in the upwardly mobile arena of university life. Here a sense of shaming humiliation at ignorance becomes the subtext of Mamet's powerful dissection of political correctness. John, a teacher with bona-fide intellectual credentials, tries to help Carol, a student who is paralyzed by her sense of inadequacy. "I don't *understand.* I don't *understand.* I don't understand what anything means. . . . I'm stupid," she says. Mamet is shrewdly setting the stage for the bracingly unfashionable notion of a woman harassing a man. What finally humiliates Carol is not so much her ignorance as his prowess. The battle that ensues brings the audience up against the awful spoiling power of envy disguised as political ideology. Carol ends up trashing the professor's life. To offer a story that risks the hue and cry of underclass ideologues is typical of Mamet's curmudgeonly brilliance. It's the theatrical equivalent of pulling to an inside straight, and Mamet, with his great narrative gifts, accomplishes it deftly, with a competent assist from two of his ever-expanding family of performers, William H. Macy and his new wife, the British-born Rebecca Pidgeon.

Mamet likes to jump the audience into the middle of a dramatic situation, and let it piece together the jigsaw of the story from the tantalizing chunks of speech his characters scatter around the stage. Here we encounter the professor on the phone, trying to close on the new house that is the first fruit of his tenure (newly granted but not yet confirmed). Across the stage, Carol, turned away from him, sits morosely on a bench. John is all orders and authority; Carol is subservience in a schmatte. Carol has arrived for an unscheduled appointment, and her professor is obviously in a rush. "Words are acts," Mamet has written, and when John and Carol finally talk to each other the authority both of John's position and of his knowledge makes the gap between them almost unbridgeable. John brusquely cuts through Carol's tentative opening questions. "Let's take the mysticism out of it," he says, sternly trying to teach Carol how to negotiate and to think like an adult. The line haunts the evening. Mystification of power is precisely the point on which John will be shafted. Carol has no apparent powers of analysis—something John demonstrates by reading a snatch of her failing essay. " 'I think that the ideas contained in this work express the author's feelings in a way that he intended, based on his results,' " he says, and breaks off in understandable professorial frustration. "What can that mean?" Carol asks the same question,



David Mamet: The playwright sets a cunning trap for the sympathies of the audience.

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not just about his lectures but about his language. Carol continually interrupts the discourse for definitions of John's educated vocabulary. Words like "predilection," "paradigm," "transpire" throw her. She demands meaning but hasn't the language to define her feelings to herself or to the world. Her adamant dimness is rightly interpreted by John as anger. In their stutter-speech, which Mamet orchestrates with overlapping rhythms, interjected phrases, emotional retreats, and attempted advances, the drama of their missed communication is made transparent and startling. No American playwright is more expert than Mamet at externalizing the sludge of consciousness and dramatizing both the meaning and the music in our stammerings:

CAROL: I'm just: I sit in class I . . . I take notes . . .

JOHN (*simultaneously with "notes"*): Yes. I understand. What I am trying to *tell* you is that some, some basic . . .

CAROL: . . . I . . .

JOHN: . . . one moment: some basic missed communi . . .

CAROL: No, no, no. I'm doing what I'm told. It's *difficult* . . .

JOHN: . . . but . . .

CAROL: I don't . . . lost of the *language* . . .

JOHN: . . . please . . .

CAROL: The *language*, the "things" that you say . . .

JOHN: I'm sorry. No. I don't think that that's true.

CAROL: It *is* true. I . . .

JOHN: I think . . .

CAROL: It *is* true.

By making Carol's situation so immediately poignant, Mamet sets a cunning trap for the sympathies of the audience. "*Teach* me. *Teach* me," she pleads, with that combination of fierce vacancy and ambition which distinguishes the American undergraduate. "I'm not your *father*," says John, who is nonetheless put in a parental role by her show of powerlessness. Carol literally calls out John's power. She has no command of language, no knowledge, no psychological understanding. But she has the pedigree of the underprivileged:

CAROL: It *is* true. I have problems.

JOHN: . . . every . . .

CAROL: . . . I come from a different *social* . . .

JOHN: . . . ev . . .

CAROL: a different . . .

JOHN: . . . Look:

CAROL: No. I: when I *came* to this school:

JOHN: Yes. quite . . .

CAROL: . . . does that mean nothing . . . ?

The issue of class does mean some-

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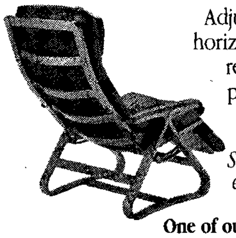

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thing to John. From their different positions in the pecking order, he has arrived at the secure place Carol wants a university education to get her to. After twenty years on the tenure track, John is now set to move into the upper middle class and to shift his son from public to private school. He interrupts their talk to make a note to himself about the school tax. "Is it a law that I have to improve the city schools at the expense of my own interest?" says John, whose liberality is confined to the classroom, and doesn't extend to society. "Is this not simply 'The White Man's Burden'?" John recognizes in Carol not only the same class struggle he underwent but the same educational struggle. His career in academe and his iconoclastic views on education are his revenge on early learning difficulties, which he spells out to Carol to assuage her panic. He immediately names her feeling of humiliation, and later shows her the dynamic of her terror, saying, "Why was I born to be the laughingstock of a world in which everyone is better than I? In which I am entitled to nothing. Where I can not learn." He is pedantic but decent. "Men are the puppydogs of the universe," Mamet wrote in his essay collection, "Some Freaks." And so John seems. He takes Carol's failure as his own, and in a rush of pedagogic vainglory he throws away the offending essay, takes up her educational challenge, and gives her a comradely hug. John becomes a latter-day Professor Higgins, offering to recap the course for her in private tutorials, and easing her anxiety about grades by promising her an A. When Carol asks why he's doing this for her, he replies, "I like you."

John, like Mamet, is a self-styled provocateur; he holds to the antique notion that education should encourage thought, and argues that the job of a teacher is to provoke. "To make me mad is your job?" says his incredulous, pragmatic pupil. John is a bit of a wag. He swaggers in speech, and the idioms that Carol finds impenetrable are metaphoric turns of phrase that intelligently tease received opinion about higher education. He talks of college as "warehousing of the young," as something that prolongs adolescence; refers to tests as "hazing"; and, like the American sociologist Thorstein Veblen, whose argument about higher learning Mamet cunningly glosses, characterizes university educa-

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tion as a "ritual" of "something-other-than-useful"—what Veblen called "a by-product of the priestly vicarious leisure class." Carol is a zealot who, having got educational religion, can't comprehend backsliders. As the audience soon discovers, John's skepticism about education marks him as a heretic.

When John and Carol square off in Act II, John is no longer the master, although at first he fondly thinks he is. His power and his blocking have changed. He sits face to face with Carol, who is now dressed in greens and blacks that hint at the paramilitary, and tries to shortcut procedure by reasoning her out of her accusations of sexism, racism, and élitism before the Tenure Committee reconvenes, by which time he will have lost his new house and his deposit. "You think, you think you can deny that these things happened; or, if they *did*, if they *did*, that they meant what you *said* they meant," Carol says. Every gesture in Act I, every exchange, every idea has been taken out of context and turned into an indictment. "What gives you the *right*," she says, in highest dudgeon, "to speak to a woman in your private, yes. Yes. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. You feel yourself empowered. . . . To *strut*. To *posture*. . . . And *confess* to a taste to play the *Patriarch* in your class. To grant *this*. To deny *that*. To embrace—your students." Mamet puts the audience exactly where John sits: up against it. Such is the power of Mamet's storytelling that the audience receives each willful misinterpretation like a body blow, audibly catching its breath at Carol's argument. Carol, who lacked words before, has got educated in a hurry by what she refers to as her Group, and she speaks now with the righteous fervor of a woman whose day has come. This transition is jarring but intentional. She has acquired a new voice and a new vocabulary, whose authority precludes ambiguity. She adopts political correctness as an intellectual carapace that substitutes dogma for thought, mission for mastery. Naming is claiming, and since Carol won't work to master a world she can't comprehend, she changes the frame of reference to a world she can. She advocates a kind of linguistic affirmative action, forcing John to define "paradigm," for example. "It's a model," he says. Carol counters, sharpish, "Then why can't you use that word?" And later, when she requires a simpler definition for the word "transpire," she rounds on John with the full malice of her envy, offering "happen" as an alternative. "Then *say* it. For Christ's sake. Who the *hell* do you think that you are? You want a post. You want unlimited power. To do and to say what you want. As it pleases you—Testing, Questioning, Flirting." This policing of language leads inevitably to a policing of the curriculum. Carol holds out the possibility of reprieve from the Tenure Committee if he'll agree to a new reading list, from which his book, among many, has been banned. "If you can choose them, others can," Carol tells him. "What are you, God?" Here, in a series of exchanges, Mamet exposes the central paradox of political correctness, which demands diversity in everything but thought.

Carol remains staunch. She is the embodiment of Mamet's mischievous assertion that "women don't give a tinker's damn about being well-liked, which means they don't know how to compromise." Carol's rigidity is a sign of her insecurity. Her ruthless orthodoxy is skillfully shown as her means of controlling her enormous anxiety of ignorance. In this production, the intelligence of Rebecca Pidgeon, who plays Carol, makes it hard to suspend disbelief in her academic ineptness but also makes her puritan willfulness powerfully credible. Dressed now, in the last of their three encounters, in a loose-fitting black jacket, green chinos, and sensible black shoes, and peering out from behind wire-rimmed glasses, Carol stands above John like some Maoist enforcer. By this last scene, it is the student who is dishing out the humiliation to the professor, calling him a "little yapping fool." William H. Macy plays John with droll liberal long-suffering. He's slow to kindle, but when Carol interprets as rape his attempt to keep her in the room to settle their disagreement ("I was leaving this office, you 'pressed' yourself into me. You 'pressed' your body into me") he finally ignites. A telephone call from his wife interrupts the final argument. "I can't talk now, baby," John says, and then orders Carol out of the office. "Don't call your wife 'baby,'" she says. It is Mamet's shrewdly placed parting shot. The throwaway line turns out to be the last straw. John belts Carol around the room. The explosion of violence sends both Carol and John's academic career crashing.

Because of the limits of the scope and intention in this short polemical play, "Oleanna" may not belong to the major part of Mamet's canon, but it's a powerful, exciting play that shows off his enormous skills as a writer. The production, however, reveals his limitations as a director. The actors' job, according to Mamet, "is to accomplish *beat by beat*, as simply as possible, the specific action set out for them by the script and the director." Both Mr. Macy and Ms. Pidgeon are a bit under wraps here, at once awed and cowed by Mamet's authority, which takes some of the acting oxygen out of the air. In this, Mamet joins the likes of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter, whose literary touch was always much surer than their directorial hand. Mamet keeps his show clean and crisp, but leaves a lot of production values still to be explored in the many other versions that "Oleanna" will certainly have.

On the night I saw it, the play was already doing its work in the world as the audience filed out of the theatre; it was a drizzly evening, and people clustered under the Orpheum Theatre marquee to keep talking.

"Too bad he had to have a woman be the heavy," one matron said.

"He's a bit of a misogynist," her friend said, and then turned to a stooped man who was obviously her husband. "What do you think?"

"No one escaped sin in the Garden of Eden," the man said—an acid thought, in keeping with the evenhanded skepticism of the play, and one that echoed something Mamet had written elsewhere about corruption. "The corrupted person, politician, parent, doctor, and artist offer us two choices," he said in "Some Freaks." "To accept them and their presumption of power *totally*, or to reject them *totally* and, so, realize that we have been cruelly duped and accept the humiliation, anger, and despair that realization entails." "Oleanna" bravely makes the audience own the ambiguity of its idealism.

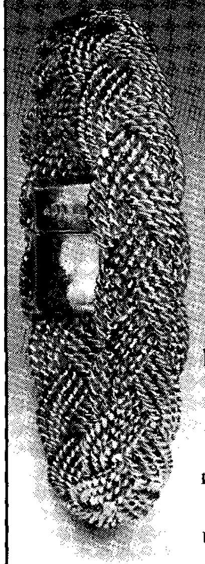
My friend Liz and I walked away talking about the play's title, which is never mentioned. Liz remembered the old Pete Seeger/Alan Lomax song about a world turned upside down—a song as oblique, and as knowing, as the play. The last stanza goes:

> So if you'd like a happy life,
> To Oleana you must go,
> The poorest man from the old country
> Becomes a king in a year or so. ◆

AT LONG LAST LOVE

by Edith Oliver

It is inconceivable to me that in a long lifetime of playgoing I had never before seen George Kelly's "The Show-Off"—one of the strongest, funniest, and most beguiling comedies in the American canon. If the Roundabout's production, which opened last week at the Criterion, were half as good, the play would still shine; as it is, under the direction of Brian Murray, every detail is worthy of the script and every part is well cast. "The Show-Off" is subtitled "A Transcript of Life in Three Acts," which God knows it is—a slice of the life of a North Philadelphia family named Fisher, which buckles under the intrusion of one Aubrey Piper, the showoff of the title, who woos and wins the hand of Amy, the family's younger daughter. A peskier pain than Aubrey is unimaginable—sporting a red carnation in his buttonhole, posing in front of every mirror he passes, and, worst of all, boasting non-stop about his career (actually, he is a clerk, at a hundred and fifty dollars a month, for the Pennsylvania Railroad) and his great expectations, laughing loudly and backslapping his cringing prospective in-laws with shrivelling self-importance. Even his toughest antagonist, Amy's mother, is defeated in the end—defeated along with the audience, that is. Those of us out front, having watched him weather a traffic disaster, pull one bluff after another, yet eventually pull a real coup out of his sleeve, cannot suppress a feeling of affection for him and a perverse pleasure that he has landed on his feet. He is an awful fellow but a loving husband and a man of general good will, and even his permanent move into Mrs. Fisher's house, her greatest dread, has its bright side. She has become a



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widow, and, as her elder daughter points out, internecine fighting is better than loneliness.

"The Show-Off" was first done here in 1924, and was revived in 1925 and again in 1967, to say nothing of its innumerable summer-theatre and regional productions. As I say, I can't imagine how I missed it, but that makes this particular revival even more of a boon; the play is so rich in characters and incidents and feelings as to make most other comedies seem skimpy. Mrs. Fisher—Mother Fisher to her annoying son-in-law—is a woman who holds strong opinions and delivers them forcefully, with a repertoire of some of the funniest, most haunting throwaway lines ever awarded a character by a dramatist. She's played here by Pat Carroll, whose casting seems not quite inevitable at first—she is as much entertainer as actor—but she becomes convincing enough as time goes by. As Aubrey, Boyd Gaines, long, skinny, and collapsible, is as flamboyant and as funny and abrasive and, finally, as appealing as he is meant to be. Sophie Hayden is charming and funny, too, as the doting Amy, unable to take her eyes or her hands off him. Laura Esterman is the elder Fisher daughter, making do, with dignity, in a marriage to a rich man who doesn't love her. Edmund C. Davys, kind and detached, is the man, and Richard Woods is Mr. Fisher, victim, among others, of Aubrey's wild bragging and bruising thumps on back and shoulders. Tim DeKay, making his Broadway début, acts with distinction the part of Joe, the Fishers' affectionate, modest live-in son, who spends most of the play tinkering with a homemade radio but also manages to invent a rustproofing process and gain a fortune. I believed in and enjoyed them all.

The exceptionally good setting was designed by Ben Edwards; the lighting was designed by Peter Kaczorowski; and the appropriate costumes are by David Charles. A tape of popular songs of the twenties, which plays sporadically, enhances our enjoyment. It isn't every evening that one can hear Fannie Brice singing "Second Hand Rose" for the price of a ticket. Brian Murray has done us proud, but the play's the thing. Dear George Kelly, you've waited in the wings far too long. Now for "The Torch-Bearers." ♦

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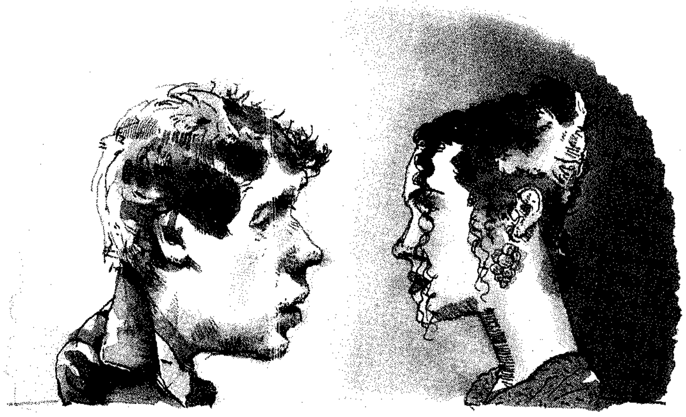

Something in common: Stephen Rea and Jaye Davidson.

"THE CRYING GAME," an amazing new movie by the Irish writer and director Neil Jordan ("The Company of Wolves," "Mona Lisa," "The Miracle"), has the sure grip and the unstoppable momentum of a dream—which are qualities, too, of great fairy tales and of the most memorable pop songs. Jordan tells the story of a troubled I.R.A. gunman who undergoes a thorough emotional metamorphosis, and he makes the hero's change of heart moving and persuasive; the film inspires an irrational sort of trust, a willing suspension of something deeper and more fundamental than simple disbelief. The world Jordan creates is derangingly volatile, as treacherous as a battleground, and the narrative keeps setting off explosions in its own path, forcing itself (and us, following) to find another way through the smoke and frenzy and blasted earth, and then another and another and another. At the end of "The Crying Game" we feel as if we'd been released from a perilous but transforming experience. There's a sense of calm, of refreshment and freakish lucidity, in the aftermath of turbulence: the hyperalertness that succeeds a vivid dream; the relief of emerging from the dark-woods horrors of a Grimm tale; the moments of peaceful exhaustion you allow yourself after hearing an especially affecting piece of music, as you glide with your partner a few seconds past the melody's end or, alone at home, sit listening to the needle's rhythmic hiss in empty grooves. In "The Crying Game" Neil Jordan sets everything spinning and leads us, in a narrowing spiral, to a place of unlooked-for clarity and repose, to the still point of the turning world.

Not only is the script full of reversals and abrupt dislocations but, halfway through, the movie springs a huge, jaw-dropping surprise—a revelation that changes utterly our understanding of everything that has gone before. The big shock is much more than a narrative trick, though, and the smaller shocks are more than mere perversities. Disorienting us isn't the ultimate aim of Jordan's artistic strategy; he jars us out of our accustomed responses to prepare us for the purer, more penetrating ones he really wants from us. The opening section of the picture (roughly its first third) is like a perfect, savagely concentrated one-act play or a classically chiselled short story. A young black British soldier, Jody (Forest Whitaker), is kidnapped from a Northern Ireland amusement park and held hostage by the I.R.A. One of his captors, Fergus (Stephen Rea), strikes up a friendship with him while they await the resolution of a tense situation: if the British authorities don't release an Irish prisoner within three days, Jody will be killed. Fergus is too tenderhearted to be completely professional about his task; Jody's affable manner and sweet sense

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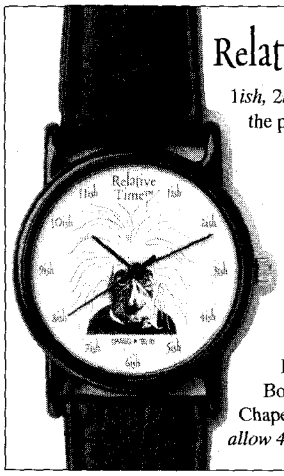

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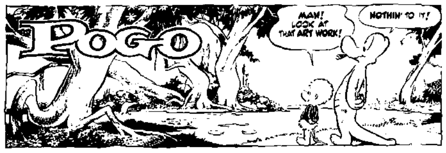
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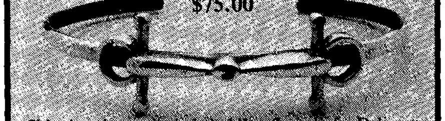

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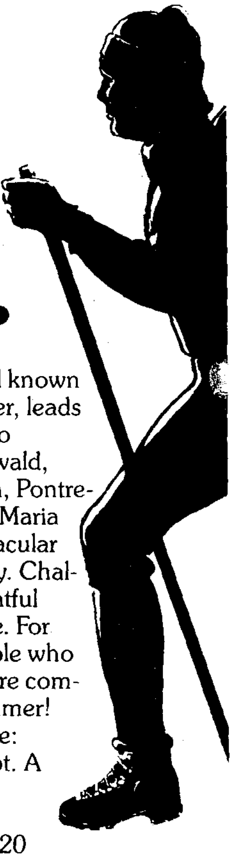
of humor are disarming (in all but the literal way), and Fergus, helplessly violating the logic of the circumstances, begins to see the captive as a particular human being rather than as an abstract enemy, a faceless target. This relationship, which develops with a swiftness that suggests an instinctive rapport, tests Fergus's idea of himself; it puts a strain on the warrior's certainty he lives by. Things end badly, of course (though not precisely as we expect them to). This brief tragedy, superbly written and played, is reminiscent of Frank O'Connor's famous short story "Guests of the Nation," one of the saddest tales in a literature of sad tales. O'Connor's narrator, an I.R.A. man who takes part in the execution of two likable British soldiers, ends his account with a plain and shattering statement: "And anything that ever happened me after I never felt the same about again."

The remaining two-thirds of "The Crying Game" is, in a sense, a daring, poetic imagining of what it means never to feel the same about anything again. After the messy, catastrophic climax of the hostage drama—a scene in which the world seems to be coming to an end, consuming itself from within—the movie picks up Fergus in a different setting and a new incarnation. He's lying low, a quiet Irishman working on a construction site in London. He has trimmed his shaggy hair to a respectable, unthreatening length. And he no longer calls himself Fergus, having traded that heroic name—the name of a legendary Irish king—for something ordinary: he answers to "Jimmy" now. His English supervisor calls him Pat, which renders him yet more anonymous, more generic, more invisible. (Even in this persona, which one character dubs Mr. Nobody, he has an air of dignity—a suggestion of kinship with the mythic Fergus of Yeats' early poems, who declares, "Now I have grown nothing, knowing all.") He can't escape himself completely. The loud drone of construction machinery is like the sound of war, and the building site overlooks a cricket pitch—a constant reminder of Jody, who was passionate about the game. Besides, Fergus has an obligation to fulfill, a painful bit of unfinished business: he promised Jody that he would seek out his girlfriend, a hairdresser called Dil (Jaye Davidson),

Hike the Alps.



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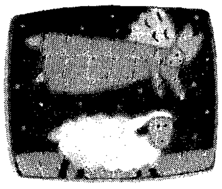

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and buy her a Margarita at the local pub. Dil—a seductive, tough-talking, light-skinned beauty—proves to be, in Fergus's words, "something else." She senses in him the qualities that attracted her to Jody: loyalty, kindness, and a sort of unself-conscious chivalry. And Fergus, although he's haunted by the memory of her former lover, is keen on her, too.

Their edgy mating dance takes place largely in the smoky, sexually charged ambience of Dil's local pub, the Metro, and the music they move to is the title song, a mournful pop ballad that was a hit in England in the sixties. It's probably not an accident that the name of this slow, insinuating pain-of-love song suggests that of the great Irish revolutionary song "The Patriot Game." The movie is about a kind of courage that originates in the agonizing chaos of emotional abandon—about the willingness to give yourself over to your most unlikely and inconvenient impulses and risk everything. In Jordan's world, crying—not patriotism, or adherence to any other formal marker of identity—is the source of heroism. Once Fergus has gone past the point at which nothing ever feels the same again, once the shocks to his system have blown away his assumptions about who he is, his actions take on an effortless, dreamlike inevitability. When, at the story's violent conclusion, he has to move decisively and lead his partner through a dangerously tricky series of steps, he doesn't put a foot wrong.

In "The Crying Game" Jordan—a novelist who began his filmmaking career as a consultant to John Boorman on the Arthurian epic "Excalibur"—has made a contemporary romantic thriller whose values are, in the best sense, medieval. Every startling twist in the plot functions as a trial for his hero; and in the end Fergus, having come through the fires of battle and through enchantments that alter the appearance of the familiar world, achieves a knightly grace. You're not likely to think of the picture's mythic overtones while you're watching it, though. The story is so unusual and so involving, and Jordan's direction is so envelopingly sensuous, that you allow the movie simply to carry you along. Jordan means to take the audience precisely where he's taking his hero, past reason and reflection and into a

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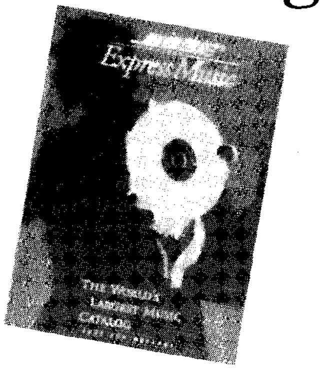

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kind of no man's land, and to make that territory—the disputed ground on which racial, national, and sexual wars are fought—look magical. As in a dream, the confusion of realms and the impossible alliances of forms come to feel natural to us: the strange shapes have their own integrity, and sometimes a beauty that catches the imagination unawares.

What makes Jordan such a heartening figure in today's cautious movie climate is that he takes his ideas to the limit. "The Crying Game," like last year's brilliant, underappreciated "The Miracle," gives visual and narrative coherence to the most complex, elusive emotional states. This picture—especially in the London passages—seems to return to the noir atmosphere and the tragic romanticism of his biggest commercial success, "Mona Lisa" (1986), but he's a better filmmaker now; the shimmering dark surface of "The Crying Game" has a transparency that the earlier film lacked. Jordan keeps trying to see to the bottom of things, to plunge into the mysteries of his own nature, and in his recent films his vision has seemed to cut through the murk and shadows of modern life like a searchlight beam. "The Crying Game" is a splendid entertainment—an elating, charmed sprint through all sorts of contemporary terrors. When it's over, we laugh and wonder how we got to where we are and what instinct has guided Jordan through the danger zone of this volatile, self-annihilating story. The miraculous quality of "The Crying Game," that sense of graceful movement to unpredictable music, isn't a shocking secret—or, at least, not an unknowable one. This unearthly-seeming ease comes from the discovery of what Jordan's countryman Yeats called "The heart-revealing intimacy That chooses right." "The Crying Game" is a fable about how a warrior becomes a true hero—about the revolutionary process by which a soldier reinvents himself as a poet and a lover. ♦

GUNS AND LOVERS

by Michael Sragow

STEVEN SEAGAL'S eyebrows are the most active features on his slablike face. When he's relatively calm and amiable, they're just furry ridges above his mail-slot eyes. When he's tense and commanding, his forehead wrinkles, a notch deepens over his nose, and his brows sharpen into two accent marks separated by an exclamation point. A Seagal movie gives you time to look for quirks, since there's nothing balletic about his brand of martial arts and nothing imaginative about the mayhem. But he boasts a string of street-oriented hits—"Above the Law" (1988), "Hard to Kill" and "Marked for Death" (both 1990), and "Out for Justice" (1991)—and has scored a breakaway commercial smash with the seafaring adventure "Under Siege," which is obliterating all records for fall releases. Although it strives for the humor and sophistication lacking in previous Seagal vehicles, the main differences between "Under Siege" and the earlier films are that the title has two words, not three, and Seagal spends much of the running time offscreen. Now more than ever, he truly is the invisible man among surefire action heroes.

Even as Hollywood death-wielders go, Seagal is numbingly utilitarian. He's tall (six feet four) and imposing, and when you first see him you think it might be fun to watch his handwork and footwork. But he conveys more pride than pleasure in demonstrating all the right moves. He's devoted to aikido, and, as he told an interviewer, Lawrence Grobel, "Aikido is not merely about fighting and the development of the physical self, but the perfection of the spiritual man at the same time. It has very harmonious movements . . . basically based on another person attacking you and you using that momentum and their state of mind to turn it back on them." In practice, this translates into dispatching his opponents with swift, brutal efficiency and occasionally throwing some mysticism into a script. What characterizes his combat scenes is an utter willingness to bend, fold, and mutilate the human body: eyes are thumbed back into the brain; knives and other utensils are shoved straight into

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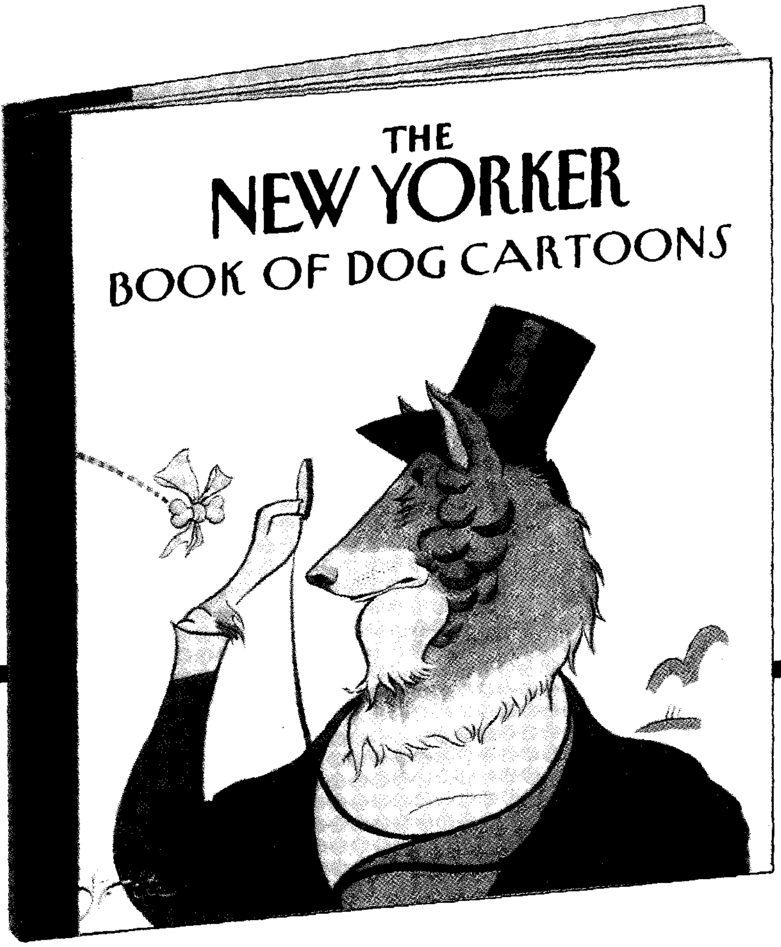
the skull; limbs aren't just broken but shorn. Chekhov said that if you put a gun on the wall in the first act it has to go off in the third. In a Seagal movie, each act has the equivalent of the gun on the wall—the most gruesome one in "Under Siege" is a jigsaw—and you don't have to wait long for it to be used.

Usually, the Seagal hero is a neighborhood guy with strong family roots who blends martial arts and street smarts. Seagal's début film, "Above the Law," offered prospective fans the movie version of a comic-book "secret origins" story. He played a cop who was born in Palermo, emigrated to Chicago when he was seven, became an instant patriot, caught a martial-arts demonstration at a baseball game, moved to Japan to study with the masters, and got sucked into Special Operations in 'Nam by a drunken C.I.A. agent at an American Embassy party. Elements of this background weave in and out of all Seagal's films, and they roughly parallel the autobiography he's fed to the press—except that Seagal was born in Detroit, raised in Orange County, founded dojos in Japan and Los Angeles, and, because of his friendship with the superagent Mike Ovitz, got the chance to become a Hollywood star. What Seagal is desperate to get across, in both his movies and his interviews, is that he's a maverick—one who derives inspiration and strength from so many sources, East and West, that he can handle anything. And what Seagal's characters defend—against gangsters, maniacs, corrupt C.I.A. men, and crooked politicians—is the good old American dream.

"Under Siege" issues the most stripped-down variation yet on the Seagal persona. To play Casey Ryback, a petty officer on the soon to be decommissioned U.S.S. Missouri, Seagal even cut off his trademark ponytail. Except for the Missouri's skipper (Patrick O'Neal), Ryback's fellow-servicemen know him only in the comically incongruous guise of the ship's cook. He's actually a former Navy SEAL with an insubordinate streak. To help keep Ryback from self-destructing, the captain has allowed him to sail out his Navy career in the galley. The director, Andrew Davis (who also made "Above the Law"), and the screenwriter, J. F. Lawton ("Pretty Woman"), know exactly what they want



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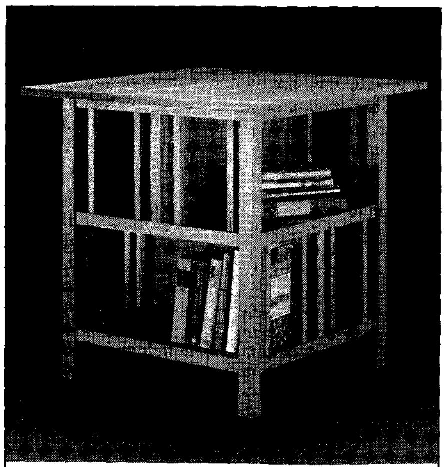

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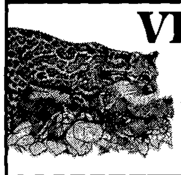

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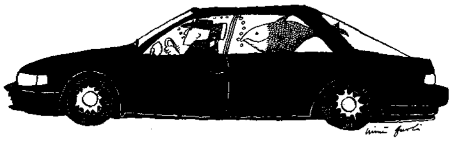
from their leading man: a more affable demeanor and the same old killer routines. And they know exactly how much they want of it, too: by a *Variety* estimate, only forty minutes' worth. The novelty of casting Seagal as a dangerous cook tickles his fans and at least keeps non-fans open-minded. But once Ryback drops his disguise the movie's biggest joke evaporates. Davis and Lawton do give equal time to the villains—Tommy Lee Jones as William Strannix, a renegade C.I.A. operative, and Gary Busey as Commander Krill, an embittered officer who teams up with Strannix to take over the Missouri and steal its Tomahawk missiles. Busey tears into his burlesque role (which includes an extended drag bit), but he isn't deft or ironic, and he grows tiresome. Jones, who gives the best performance in the movie, comes up with a surprise or two: when he's not being comically casual, he spoofs his own intensity.



The screenplay establishes Strannix and Ryback as goofy doppelgängers. Our hero tries to reason with Strannix, rebel to rebel. He says they serve the same master, who's a lunatic. Strannix replies, "You have faith and I don't." Too bad the plotting and the staging are so limply cartoonish that Strannix and Ryback don't engage in a battle of wits (or even half-wits) or a satisfying bout of duelling eyebrows. The filmmakers never lay out the geography of the ship, and without it there's no suspense—only one showdown after another, with stunts heavily influenced by the "Die Hard" movies, and a crew of bad guys whose number seems to fluctuate more than the October polls did. Worst of all, there's an awesomely silly subplot featuring Erika Eleniak as an aspiring actress and former Playmate of the Month who goes the pre-feminist action-heroine route, from screaming female to hero's right-hand gal. (Her character gets the funniest résumé: she says she appeared in an episode of "Hunter" and a "Wet & Wild" video.) Eleniak, like the filmmakers and the audience, is stuck with Seagal. Maybe he's so popular because he answers the need of a volatile, confused age: he can symbolize nearly anything while embodying next to nothing.

MARGUERITE DURAS'S 1984 autobiographical novel "The Lover" is like an erotic addendum to Edmund Wilson's "The Wound and the Bow"—a celebration of literary artists as the psychological walking wounded. Writing in the mode of lyric confessional reminiscence, the narrator details her sexual initiation at the age of fifteen and a half by a wealthy twenty-seven-year-old Chinese man in 1929 Saigon. This traumatic ecstasy and the romantic disillusionment that followed it were the culmination of her early life in a warped French-colonial family, and the source of all her subsequent creative efforts (including her script for Alain Resnais's "Hiroshima, Mon Amour," which focussed on a French actress's affair with a Japanese architect *and* her doomed first love for a German soldier during the Second World War). Even for those not familiar with Duras's œuvre, the book succeeds in casting an oracular spell—the kind that usually presupposes a reader's awareness of the author's significance. Duras doesn't separate her sexual coming of age from her aesthetic calling, or her lust for the Chinese lover from other impulses, such as greed (she frankly exploits his money to help her struggling family) and incest (a drive she confronts more explicitly in her 1991 retelling of the same story, "The North China Lover"). What holds the novel together, and keeps you in its grip, is the magisterial control of Duras's prose.

You wouldn't want to be locked in that grip much longer than the book's hundred and fourteen pages; you couldn't be, without feeling like a prisoner of Duras's sensibility. Duras must have realized that a film shouldn't be so refined and literary; "The North China Lover," which is far more freewheeling and gritty than "The Lover," grew out of screenplay material she wrote for the film's director, Jean-Jacques Annaud, before she broke with him. But Annaud and Gerard Brach, with whom he co-wrote the shooting script, take a reverential approach. Framing the film with shots of the aged woman scribbling away at her writing desk, they simply illustrate the story of the Young Girl (Jane March) and the Chinese Man (Tony Leung), and use Duras's narration (spoken by Jeanne Moreau) whenever they're absolutely pressed to articulate what's happening. The result is a singularly empty moviegoing experience—one French wag called it " 'Emmanuelle' on a thirty-million-dollar budget." Annaud does appropriate Duras's splashiest new bit: the Girl planting a lingering kiss on the window of the Chinese Man's limo. But the over-all tone is banal, alternating between the trembling anticipation of young-adult romance and the glossy pictorialism of swank soft-core porn. If Duras's "The Lover" is prismatic, the movie views the action through a square pane. Annaud's point of attack isn't acute enough to clarify the tensions in the Girl's family and the chaos of life in colonial Indochina: as the Man proclaims his love and the Girl tries out her budding wiles on him, the movie becomes a game of "She loves me, she loves me not." March (an English model) and Leung (a movie star in Hong Kong and Taiwan) are glamorous and pretty in paralyzingly conventional ways. Although they expose their bodies with aplomb, Annaud stages their grappling so self-consciously, with so few undercurrents to carry you along, that you tire of their flesh. You get more from studying the book-jacket photograph of Duras at eighteen—she stares straight out, with precocious sexuality and impudence—and from reading lines like "Now I see that when I was very young, eighteen, fifteen, I already had a face that foretold the one I acquired through drink in middle age." ♦

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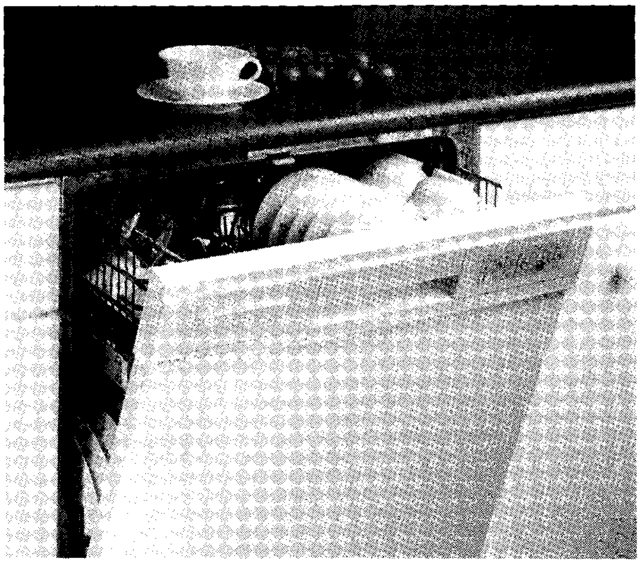

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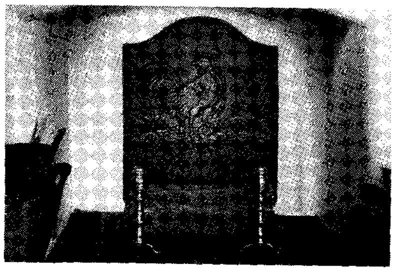

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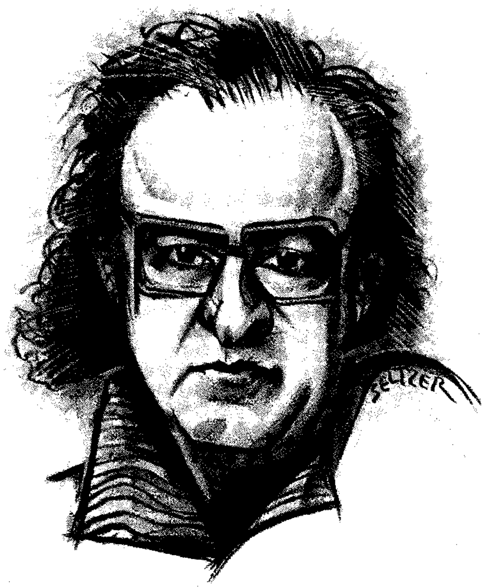
BOOKS

OF SICKENED TIMES

by John Updike

THE collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe has deprived that region's writers of a noble possibility, that of dissidence. As long as their totalitarian states sought to maintain a monopoly on truth, enlisting culture as a branch of propaganda, individual truth-tellers with even a particle of defiant integrity enacted a heroic role. Dangerous and harried though their lives were, threatened by suppression and exile, if not, as under Stalin, imprisonment and death, they had no fear of irrelevance. Their subversive mission was clear. Published by foreign presses and internal samizdat, their poems and fictions embodied freedom; in the free world, best-sellerdom and celebrity status rewarded Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn, Sinyavsky and Brodsky for defying the Soviet censors. If the writers of the satellite nations, with the possible exception of Czechoslovakia's Josef Škvorecký and Milan Kundera, failed to excite the same bursts of sympathetic attention in the easily distracted West, publishers here did bring forth, to respectful attention, translations of Poland's Tadeusz Konwicki, East Germany's Uwe Johnson and Reiner Kunze, Yugoslavia's Danilo Kiš, and tiny, ferociously repressive Albania's remarkably relaxed Ismail Kadare, to name but a few. Romania's Norman Manea is the latest, and possibly will be the last, of those writers whose voices command extra attention for emanating from behind the Iron Curtain.

Grove Weidenfeld has published simultaneously a book of essays by Manea, "On Clowns: The Dictator and the Artist" (translated by Cornelia Golna, Irina Livezeanu, Joel Agee, Anselm Hollo, and Alexandra Bley-Vroman; $18.95), and a book of his stories, "October, Eight O'Clock" (translated by Cornelia Golna, Mara Soceanu Vamos, Marguerite Dorian, Elliott B. Urdang, Max Bleyleben, and Anselm Hollo; $18.95). It seems safe to say that something has been lost in the many-handed translation: the essays, though finely and judiciously phrased, are less informative than we expect, and the stories less entertaining. Manea has been in the West "a few years," he tells us in introducing his essays, and teaches literature at Bard College; he has already developed, or he came equipped with, a capitalist sense of the writer as a surly waif. He is a self-described "convalescent," whose nagging malaise spreads through his pages like a faintly sweet fog of wary ego. His wounds, he avers, have left him "with no more than a moderate optimism, no matter on which meridian his future is taking new roots. Perhaps that is why the vivacity of victory and the joy of liberation do not abound in these pages."



Norman Manea: Gleaning the lessons of Romania's catastrophe.

All Communist countries were unhappy in their own way, and Romania's case brimmed with paradoxes. In a part of Europe dominated by Slavs, the ancient nation is a "Latin island," speaking a Romance language and tracing its Latinity back to its settlement, in the second and third centuries, as the Ro-

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man province of Dacia. A monarchy bedevilled by fascist parties, it managed to fight on both sides in the Second World War, and emerged bigger in 1945 than it had been in 1940. Though cursed with a long and virulent tradition of anti-Semitism, it withheld from the Nazi Holocaust several hundred thousand of its Jews. And though Nicolae Ceaușescu, its leader from 1965 on, appeared to the West as an enlightened independent who took a number of foreign-policy steps in defiance of the Moscow line—establishing diplomatic relations with West Germany in 1967, maintaining friendly relations with Israel after the 1967 war, and refusing to join in the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia—he ended by creating a personal dictatorship as absurd and ruinous as that of any Third World megalomaniac. Of the six satellite Communist states of Eastern Europe, only Romania overthrew its government with gunfire, bloodshed, and the execution of the leader. Manea ascribes to his native land "a national history consisting of a series of catastrophes, a geographic position at the crossroads of East and West, directly in the path—and at the mercy—of interests more powerful than one's own: all this probably teaches caution." The national attitude is summed up in the phrase *bun simț*, which literally means "good sense" and connotes "a kind of instinctual delicacy in human relations." It was this widespread delicacy, we are left to conclude, which allowed Ceaușescu to become an ever more vicious tyrant, who "changed the whole country into a huge kindergarten populated by militarized and industrious children"—"a whole nation subjugated, hungry, humiliated, and forced to celebrate the crime ceaselessly."

In the title essay Manea asks the crucial question "Are the tyrant and the suppressed masses truly irreconcilable in every respect, or is it a matter of unconscious reciprocal stimulation?" Instead of concentrating on the answer, however, he indignantly rehearses Ceaușescu's clownishness—"his ridiculous, self-awarded, ever more pompous titles, his endless speeches full of vast platitudes with their perennial hoarse bathos . . . his stutter and puppetlike gestures, his manic insistence and schizophrenic industry, and his perplexity when confronted with anything still alive and

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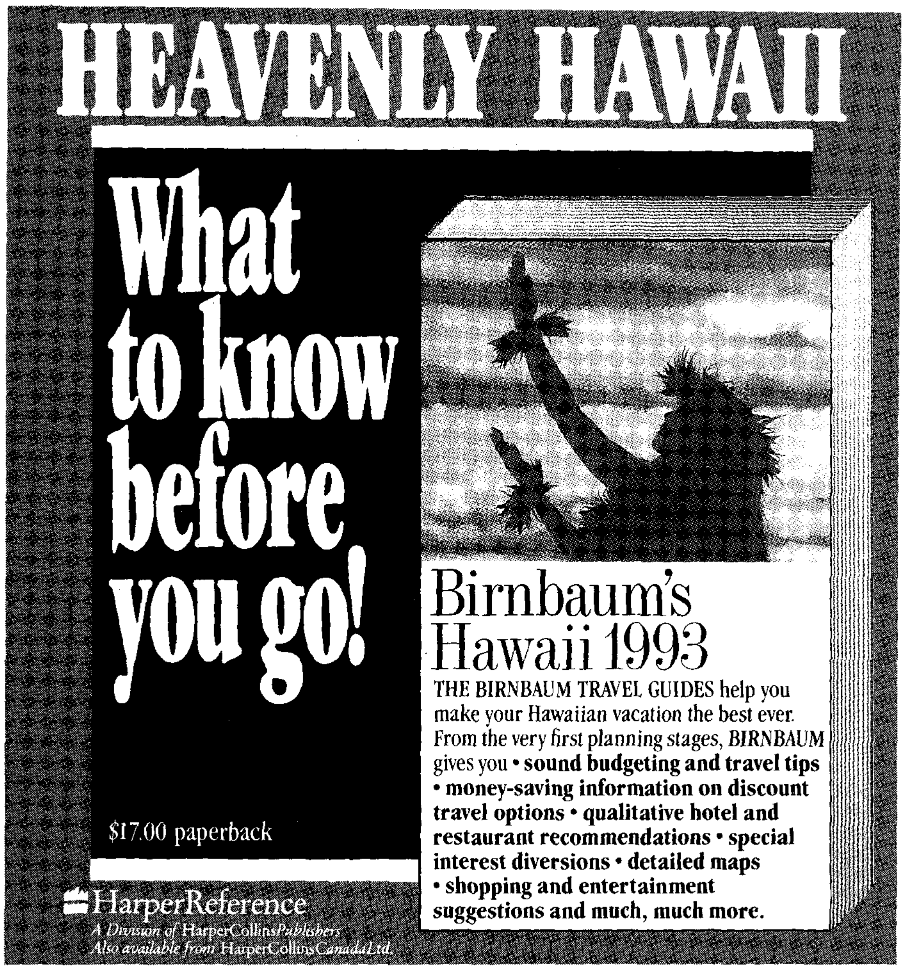
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spontaneous"—and indulges himself in variations on the metaphoric pairing of the White Clown (the totalitarian dictator, "the clown, a little white mouse, a carrier of the plague: a death's-head of nothingness") and Auguste the Fool, who represents the artist and the poet and his own autobiographical persona, as elaborated in an earlier work, "Auguste the Fool's Apprenticeship Years."

Manea was fifty when he emigrated, in 1986, and had been a published writer for nearly twenty years. His essays "Censor's Report" and "The History of an Interview" describe personal ordeals at the hands of state thought control, which over the years acquired an urbane and reasonable face. "An elegant young man from the 'Writers Section' [of the Securitate, the state security system] was polite and cool, he spoke openly. For more than an hour he discussed . . . Faulkner. And discussed him competently, I must admit. This confirmed the success that the Securitate had had in recent decades in recruiting some of the best university graduates." The specimen censor's report on Manea's novel—politely deploring the book's negativity, pleading for "balance," and advising that the text be modified "by the elimination of . . . excesses in the area of caricature, irony, and grotesquery," and "the insertion of some positive, affirmative passages"—sounds much like an American publisher encouraging a writer to turn his querulous bildungsroman into an upbeat best-seller. In fact, Manea took the advice and, with the help of a sympathetic editor, did publish the novel; it sold out its large edition of twenty-six thousand copies and received favorable reviews. The compromised author tells us movingly:

> Was I happy when I saw my newly published book? It had been a difficult and unhoped-for birth. My crippled baby, though it was not as I had imagined it, was still mine. The bonds that joined us, strong and scarred, were of this time and place in which we struggled, mutilated ourselves, to stay on the surface.

Nevertheless, he left Romania a few months later. A fitfully, erratically enlightened dictatorship was in some ways worse than absolutism. "I am a writer who could not have been published during the Stalinist era. My generation grew up in the ambiguous, tortured, agonizing period (the 'enlightened years') of the new dictatorship.” In the atmosphere of duplicity both official and unofficial, “the guilt was general but there were many levels. Some were guilty, while others had guilt imposed upon them.”

“Felix Culpa” is the title of the essay that American readers may find most interesting, since it deals with a Romanian immigrant much admired here, the late Mircea Eliade, a professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School and the author of, among fifty books, the magisterial four-volume “A History of Religious Ideas.” Eliade, a scholarly prodigy, received his Ph.D. from the University of Bucharest in 1933 and was appointed an assistant to the famous Nae Ionescu, a professor of logic and metaphysics. Eliade, Manea explains, “was fascinated by his mentor and friend, even when Ionescu became a propagandist for Italian fascism and German national socialism and a passionate supporter of the Iron Guard, the extreme-right-wing Romanian nationalist movement.” Eliade himself went on record as a staunch admirer of Mussolini and the Iron Guard, before the Guard’s suppression and Eliade’s departure, in 1940—first to London, then to Lisbon, where he composed a book in praise of Portugal’s dictator, Antonio Salazar. After the war, Eliade’s Iron Guard associations prevented his return to Communist Romania; he taught at various European universities and finally, in 1956, came to the United States. His frequent autobiographical writings gave him ample opportunity to recant or at least discuss his earlier pro-fascist views, but he never did, to Manea’s disappointment. It *is* disappointing: the bulk of right-wing intellectuals and artists from fascism’s thirties heyday—Pound, Hamsun, Céline, Heidegger, most notoriously—did not publicly express much repentance. Though a few, like Eliade and Paul de Man, came to the United States and became prominent citizens of our pluralistic democracy, almost none announced that they had been wrong, or had contributed their voices to what became a tide of mass murder. When Eliade’s Iron Guard sympathies were, in his later life, cited against him (as in Furio Jesi’s “Culture of the Right,” in 1979), he opted for silence and, in his published journals, defensive dismissals that hinted at Israeli plots or a campaign “to eliminate me from among the favor-

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ites for the Nobel Prize." More than once, he referred to his "adoration for Nae Ionescu" as a *felix culpa*, a happy guilt. Manea rightly regrets that so little honest testimony has emerged from the fellow-travellers of fascism, but he seems to prejudge what that testimony would be when he writes, "If these 'guilty' witnesses could reveal the essentials of the monstrous banality of evil, we could probably not only understand more thoroughly the past but also have a better idea of the future of humanity." But fascism's nationalistic and racial romanticism may not ever have seemed evil or banal to its adherents, even when, like the sexual romanticism of youth, it had been outgrown or proven impracticable.

In Romania's case, right-wing ideology took the form of "Romanianism," a xenophobic, anti-Semitic reaction to the enlargement of the country, by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War, to include sizable minority populations of Hungarians, Jews, and Germans. The word "Romanianism" had existed since the nineteenth century and contained a Christian Orthodox streak going back to Byzantium; the Iron Guard's original name was the Legion of the Archangel Michael. The notion of a mystical ethnic purity might well have appealed to a connoisseur of myths; Eliade originally conceived of Romanianism as being "above politics." The language of his thirties journalism, however, does not blink at the savage side of purification in practice: "Social reforms will be enacted with considerable brutality, every corner of the provinces now overrun with foreigners will be recolonized, all traitors will be punished, the myth of our State will extend all across the country" (1937); "We await a nationalist Romania, frenzied and chauvinistic, armed and vigorous, ruthless and vengeful" (1938). His chauvinism, Manea points out, took "the form of anti-Hungarian and anti-Slavic babble" (Eliade described Hungarians as "after the Bulgarians the most imbecilic people ever to have existed") more than that of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism was a central tenet of Romanianism, whose biases persisted into the Communist regime: "Ceauşescu's Stalinism gradually became a camouflaged fascism." Now, post-Ceauşescu, a reëmerged right-wing press has canonized Nae Ionescu and his disciple Mircea Eliade.

IN the last essay in the collection, "The History of an Interview," Manea, a Jew, tells us that when a disarming young man came from the Securitate in 1985 to talk to him about his application for a passport to France and Germany, he realized that "the officer was from the Department of Minorities." When Manea inquired, "Why are nationalistic, anti-intellectual, anti-Semitic, and anti-Western texts still being printed?" he affably called Manea "a European type" and asked him, "Why don't you emigrate?" The passport came through, as did passports for Manea and his wife a year later, when he decided that "the situation in the country was growing ever more dangerous, and my own had probably reached its limits." He emigrated. A writer does not lightly abandon the homeland of his language. Manea's account of old disputes with certain fellow-writers is a detailed pathological report that only specialists may enjoy, but in the course of it he gives his life story in a paragraph:

> I did not want to accept the ethnic corner in which the Authority was trying to isolate me. The child who had come back from the concentration camp at the end of the war wanted at all cost to forget, at all cost to be like everyone else. Forty years later, must I again feel a victim? I could not bear it. I mistrusted those who professionalized their laments and I hated those who provoked them.

The fifteen stories of "October, Eight O'Clock" rehearse that history, in the veiled language of fiction. This collection was published in Romania in the fall of 1981, when Communism appeared to have a lock on a vast territory from Prague to Pyongyang. This simple and helpful bibliographical date is nowhere divulged in the book itself, or on its jacket, but is revealed in Manea's book of essays, where he discusses an impolitic interview he gave at about the same time. "October, Eight O'Clock" was published, then, in a police state, which goes a good way toward explaining what to this Western reader seemed the stories' principal fault: they

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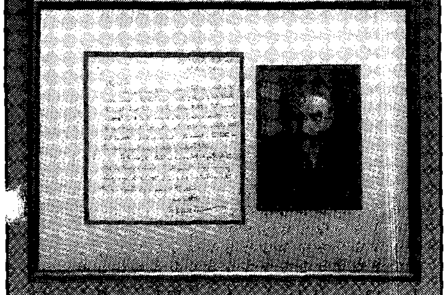

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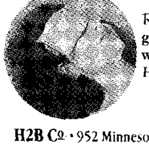

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feel cryptic. They are arranged in the order of the protagonist's age, and a muffled autobiography runs through them—an increasingly aggrieved, dispirited life whose critical moments and intimate moods we are invited to share without proper introductions' ever having been performed.

Manea's early stories, of childhood, are the clearest, though their bleak and savage environment would come as a puzzlement to the reader who did not know that in 1941 the author, at the age of five, was deported with his family to an internment camp in the Ukraine. Though not an extermination camp, like those in Poland, this camp was bad enough. The first story, "The Sweater," like Cynthia Ozick's "The Shawl," conjures up extreme deprivation by means of a coveted object in a world almost without furnishings. The narrator's mother, who is free to work in the countryside, knitting for peasants, has pieced together a sweater for her dying daughter, Mara. When this child dies, the sweater descends to her brother, yet when he puts it on he becomes sick and nearly dies himself. His reconciliation with the sweater can serve as an index of Manea's considerable powers of evocation:

> I put my nose, my whole face, in its roughness, once so soft and good, to let myself be intoxicated by its warmth, like that of toasted bread or boiled potatoes, or by the smell of fresh sawdust, or the fragrance of milk, of rain, of leaves, or by the longing for pencils and apples. But it was not like that; rather a strange odor, that of mold. Something rotten and penetrating. Or only sharp, suffocating, I don't remember. It had become darker, and unfamiliar, unappealing.

With such sensory penetration the story earns its chilling last sentence: "Time itself had sickened, and we belonged to it."

When advancing Russian armies and peace dissolve the world of the internment camp, with its death-imitating children's games (in the story "Death") and proud pantomimes of normal life ("Proust's Tea"), the boy hero moves into a world where unaccustomed food nauseates ("We Might Have Been Four"), where other children call him "kike" ("The Balls of Faded Yarn"), and where the rhetoric of Communism is already establishing itself. In "Weddings," an older cousin harshly schools the little survivor in a speech remembering the miseries of the war, which he then gives

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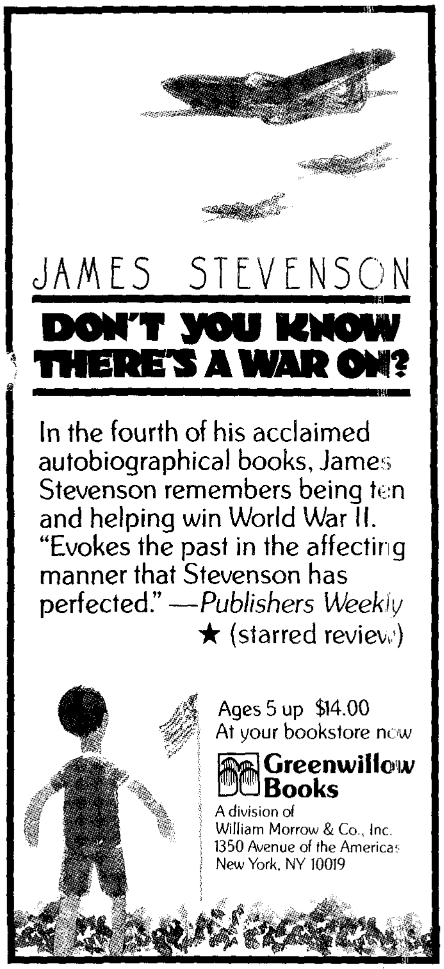
over and over. A quoted fragment of the speech deftly gives its pro-Soviet flavor: ". . . our brothers, in whose hands we saw a loaf of bread, when we had forgotten what bread looked like. And we say to you, let us not forget, let us not forgive, let us punish those who . . ." After the first success, the cousin fades away, "off his rocker," "roaming the countryside with bands of rebels," and his protégé, who has "become skillful at shielding his feelings by retreating behind a pale mask of sleepiness," gives the speech repeatedly, at weddings and anniversaries, name days and birthdays. The speech begins, "We, who haven't known the meaning of childhood . . ." But the child still isn't allowed to know; he is kept up late, through the dregs of parties, offering crowds "his old, choking fears." This rhetorical exploitation is capped by a rhetorical coda of the author's: "Only at dawn did he feel the smoke choking him again. He reeled, dizzy with weariness and sadness." To a child of the camps, peacetime Romania is a world of hidden menace, where words have a strange life of their own ("The Exact Hour") and a book of fairy tales, read over and over, is a way to come "to grips with the enchantment," the fact that "anything could become anything": "The fairy tales were real, and each one held a threat. They were real, he felt it, the old story is coming back. The fear had come back."

Teachers figure in a number of the stories, with the recurrent suspicion that being taught is a way of being corrupted. "The Instructor" contrasts a handsome young instructor at a Soviet Young Pioneer camp, who enlists his prize camper as a reader of the other campers' letters, and a plump, pale, hoarse old rabbi, who, as a favor to the boy's late grandfather, has prepared him for his bar mitzvah with lessons in Hebrew and diffident lectures in Judaic theology. The unbelieving boy has submitted, to win his parents' permission to go to the Young Pioneer camp; there he falls ill in disgust at being enlisted as a censor and a spy. When he meets the rabbi for the last time, he learns that at school he had been a party to expelling the rabbi's daughter for not doing homework on Saturdays. He confesses aloud, "Yes, I swallowed the poison, my instructors hoped I deserved this honor, this horror," and inwardly concludes, "Better



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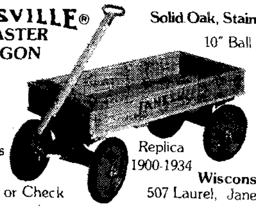

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alone! Without parents, instructors." This is powerful material, this portrait of an adolescent torn between two unconvincing ideologies, but it is awkwardly wrapped in cinematic conceits and an obliquity necessitated, presumably, by the restrictive literary environment.

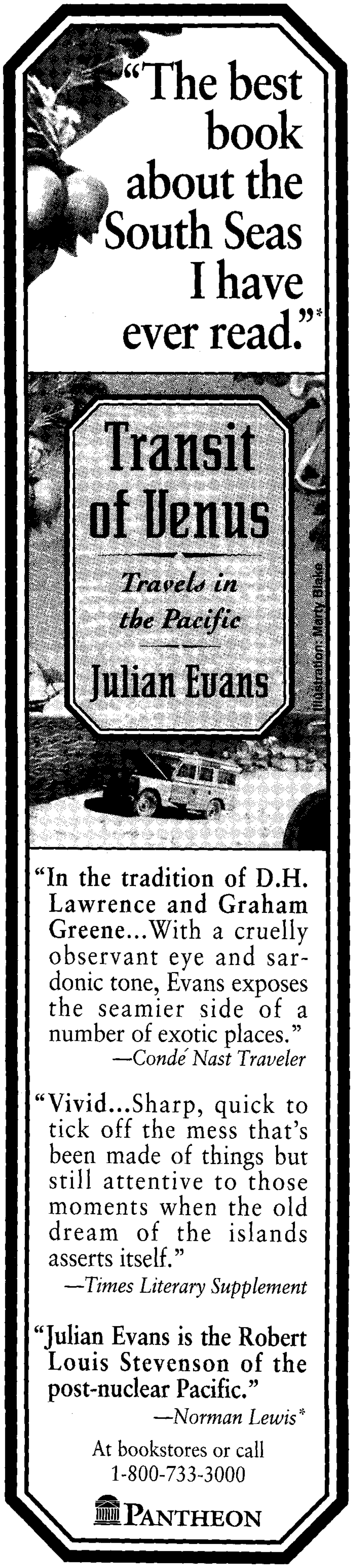
As the hero matures, it becomes increasingly difficult to know exactly what is going on. In "Summer," does he blackmail the servant girl into sleeping with him, or does he only fantasize it? In the longest of the stories, "The Turning Point," what happens to the carefully described wife and sister-in-law with whom he visits the sea at the end of his university studies, and where does the heroine of a later visit, given the pop-star name of Nana Mouskouri, come from, and where does she go to? Well, women come and go in a man's life, and Communist intellectuals, repressed by the state above the neck, often lead freewheeling sex lives. Still, the oneiric slipperiness of detail muddles the force of the story's central relation—the hero's almost suicidal fascination with the sea, "its magnificent rebellion, its immense crash."

In this tale, and in the four shorter ones that follow, and that conclude the collection, an increasingly violent poetry of description offers itself as a substitute for events:

> Hours of bread, and chains, struggling in silence, gritting teeth, refusing, harboring hatred, fleeing the noise of ovations that accompanied complicity and moral decline. It goes without saying that heroics were futile: the dragon's arms reached everywhere, they caught you and beat you down, time and again, until you finally learned the drumbeat of this place.

A hovering, ironic rage reminds us of Dostoyevski's Underground Man, jeering at the Victorian Age's Crystal Palace. "I confess," Manea's nameless hero declares, "that the only transgression I haven't been able to rid myself of, in this steadily descending spiral of life, is my lack of faith in the charity of the authorities. I deny that anyone has the right to determine what is good or bad for me."

The citizens all around the hero are "poisoned or crushed by something invisible, enormous, with a miraculous power to discourage them even before they've tried anything." Small wonder that the rebellion and crash of the sea are irresistibly inviting, even to a man who can hardly swim and almost



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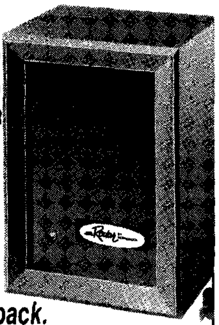

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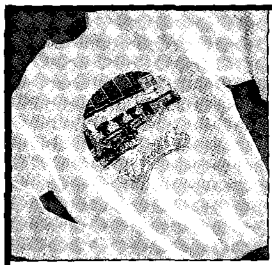

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drowns. The stress of life on land goads the writer to hysterical and opaque outbursts of language:

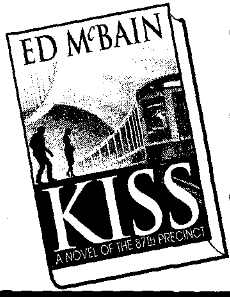
> Her lissome young body became a long piece of steel that bent under the weight of her suffering until, in their violent embrace, it burst in a rain of silvery sparks. Their youth: a bloody membrane; the glasslike breaks, the reconciliations; the torture of frail, melancholy cannibals; hypocrisy, cruelty; the great feral leap.

The ultimate referent for all this strangulated emotion, this feverish imagery, remains obscure, unmentionable. But in the essay "On Clowns" it is clear enough: "His caricature grins from every wall of the country, the country that once embodied hope. A hope of life, for better or worse, but a life: in the light of youth, at the time of decline, in the intoxication of love, in rebellious dreams as well as bitter disappointment." Totalitarianism, in its two major twentieth-century forms, has stolen Manea's life from him. A childhood in a Nazi internment camp yielded, with scarcely a pause, to a youth under an imposed Communism; an evil fairy tale became a grotesque circus. A captive victim, he has withstood his life rather than lived it; unlike Koestler and Kundera and Eliade, he never participated in the illusions that gave rise to totalitarianism, so his testimony is intelligent and plaintive rather than involving. Though Manea lays claim to "deep solidarity with people's unhappiness"—the unhappiness of "a whole shackled nation"—he was "instinctively suspicious and disdainful of [Ceauşescu] even before he started baring his teeth in the horrendous Grand Guignol performance." Consistently disdainful and helpless, he disdains, in the fiction of "October, Eight O'Clock," the objectifying, counteraggressive satire we find in Konwicki and Kiš, and in his essays presents an eloquent but faintly etiolated *non mea culpa*. ♦

FIRST THINGS FIRST DEPARTMENT

[*From the St. Johnsbury* (*Vt.*) *Caledonian-Record*]

The Ladies Benevolent Society of the Concord Community Church met recently to discuss various items of business. Vivian Hovey led devotions and Arlene Stanley opened the meeting with prayer. The Harvest Supper was planned for Sept. 26. Plans were made to renovate the bathroom, including a new toilet, wallpaper and vinyl flooring. Options for a new pastor were also discussed.



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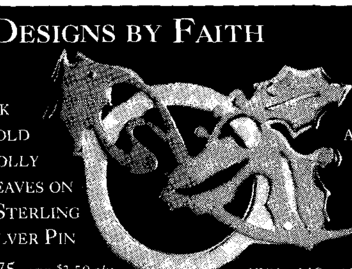

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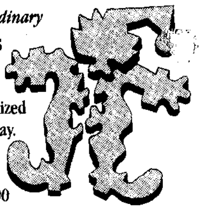

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BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Arcadia
by Jim Crace (Atheneum; $20)

IF love and squalor are famously desirable in a story, this one delivers, though at times the two may be hard to distinguish. A child from the countryside, Victor rises from beggary in the farmers' market of an English city to own the market and monopolize the farms that feed it, until, at eighty, he can peer down on his past from his penthouse, in which he is all but hermetically sealed. He has raised up a younger vender, Rook, to be his assistant. Rook repays him by taking kickbacks from the market and inveigling Victor's secretary into further betrayals of the boss. The human drama is the squalid part, yet one is almost shocked to find how fully one cares for these cool customers, and disappointed to be held at arm's length from them. The love here is for the organicism of cities, and for the fruit and vegetables that keep the population going, described up close: "Rook scalped the orange at its pig with his teeth. . . . The pith made anchovies of flannelette beneath his nails." It is language so sensuous you can almost take nourishment from it.

City of Light
by Michael Doane (Knopf; $22)

AT the Paris headquarters of ABRI, a small-time human-rights organization, a coded message comes across Thomas Zane's computer screen: "ELEVEN GONE TO BLUE. LIGHT WATER." It means that Zane's best friend, Harry Street, has been killed in Africa, where he is one of Zane's "rakers," an informant relaying information on abuses back to Paris. It also means that the anonymous sender is an eyewitness, but he does not reveal the killer's identity. Zane's quest to verify the message puts him on the trail of two elusive figures: Ambrose Okimbo, a Nigerian revolutionary poet and the husband of Street's lover; and a possibly fictitious developer of torture serums known among Africans as Sky Eyes. Mr. Doane's thriller is no mere entertainment. Its leisurely detours tend to be more compelling than the mystery Zane is unravelling—like the story of Petitjean, Zane's stuttering officemate, who falls for his girlfriend's deaf daughter. This book of revelations is about the tricks that information and identity play on each other, and Zane at last finds what he's looking for—his "light water"—in a Mali village populated only by victims of a disease called river blindness.

GENERAL

Hemingway: A Life Without Consequences
by James R. Mellow (Houghton Mifflin; $30)

THE publishers promise that this book will challenge "the image Hemingway fashioned for himself" and "explode" many of the myths surrounding him. In truth, however, this is not a revisionist study; after all, few people still believe in the image, and the myths have mostly been exploded by now. What Mr. Mellow, an accomplished and thoughtful biographer, offers us here is a rounded life, encompassing the externals of Hemingway's strenuous, eventful, and sometimes noisy existence, and an interpretative and intuitive study of his career as a writer—in particular, as the inventor of a powerfully influential literary style. While not neglecting the shameful aspects of Hemingway's behavior—the betrayal of old friends, the violence, the lies and bragging—Mr. Mellow writes sympathetically of a man who stands not only as a great American writer of the twentieth century but as a figure of tragedy. Photographs.

Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II
by Harold Werner, edited by Mark Werner (Columbia; $24.95)

AS the Germans tightened their control over Jews in Poland late in 1939, Mr. Werner fled east from Warsaw, eventually taking to the woods and joining other Jewish fugitives there. At first, without weapons, they were reduced to begging for food and were constantly threatened by German raids—raids led by anti-Semitic local Poles, who guided the Nazis to the hiding places of neighbors they had known all their lives. In some ways, this memoir is a tale of astonishing success—the small group slowly grew, joined with other groups, and became a partisan force able to blow up bridges, attack German convoys, rescue other Jews, and exact revenge for earlier betrayals. Yet for Mr. Werner and his comrades there was little sense of triumph: since they had seen their families and friends murdered, and knew what the smoke from the nearby Sobibor death camp signified, their fight was simply all that was left for them. This account has the authority of unvarnished human testimony; Mr. Werner's matter-of-fact tone makes the story he tells all the more horrifying.

Solo: Life with an Electric Car
by Noel Perrin (Norton; $18.95)

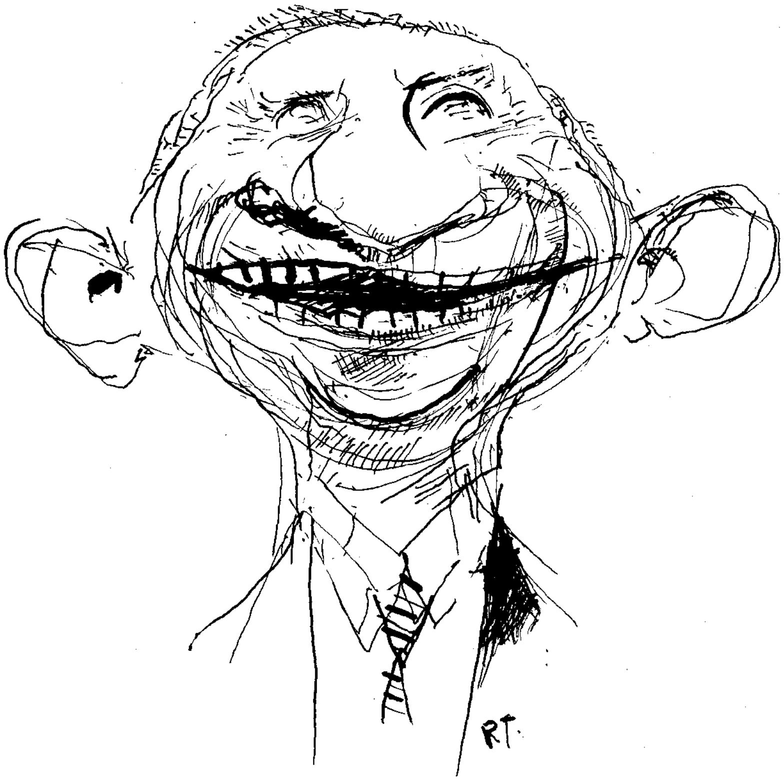
THE author, a writer who is also a professor of environmental studies at Dartmouth, decided a few years ago that in the interests of consistency he should commute to work in a vehicle that would not pollute: an electric car. After a prolonged search, he found a small manufacturer of EVs, as electric vehicles are known, in California, and he dedicated a summer vacation to buying one and learning how to handle it (and how to contend with its limited range of only fifty miles without a pause of six to eight hours for recharging). This is the story of how he got his EV—a converted Ford Escort he named Solo—home. It is brightly written, but without any forced humor, and manages to pack in a good deal of information on electric cars, which Mr. Perrin sees as the pop conveyances of the very near future—an opinion shared, perhaps reluctantly, by the leading automobile manufacturers, all of whom are working on EV prototypes. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

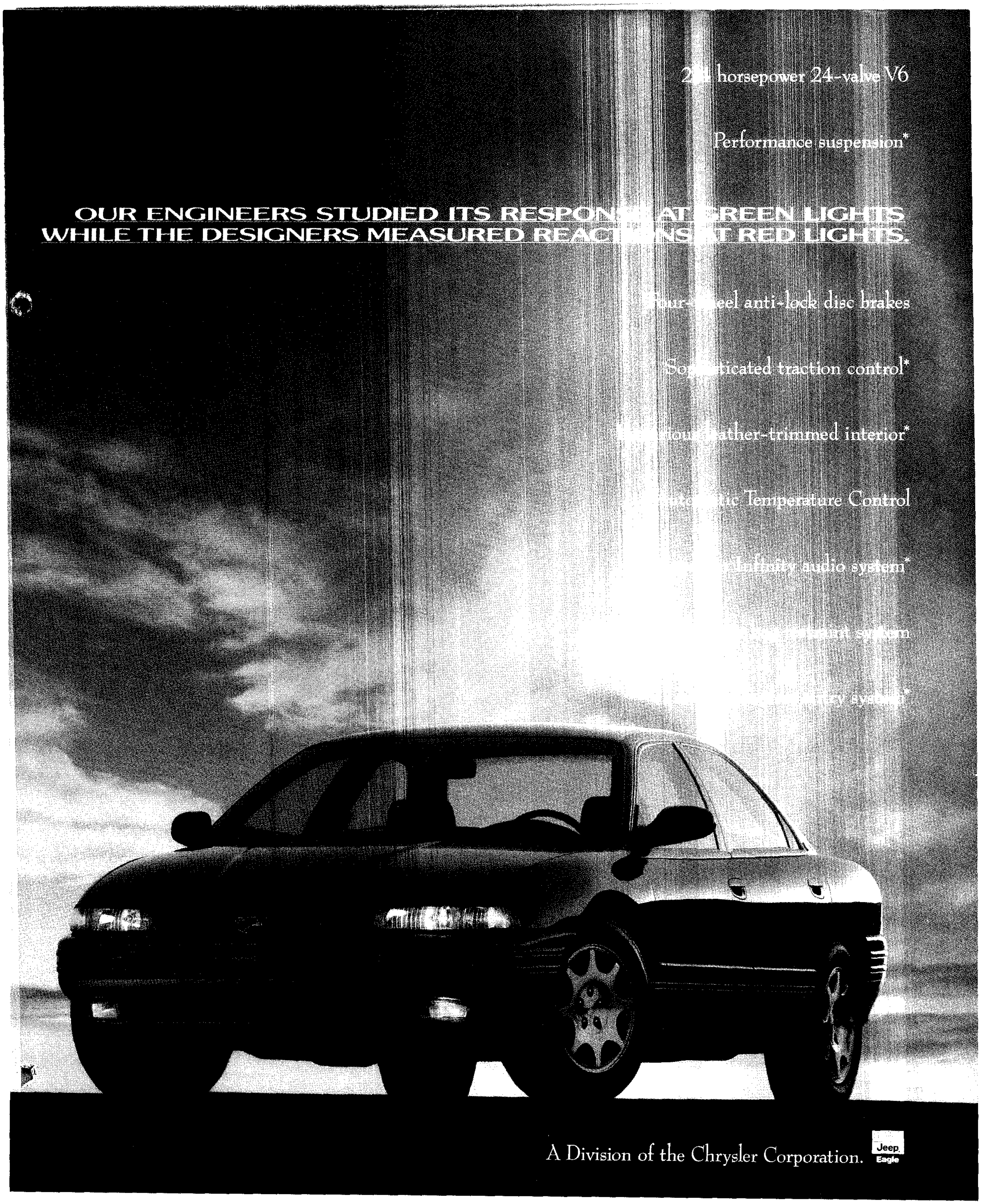
PEROT: THE SEQUEL

by Michael Arlen

In the end, what's so rattling about Ross Perot's grab ("bid" hardly seems the right word) for the Presidency is how close he came. Granted, some might say that a third-place finish with only nineteen per cent of the vote doesn't seem close. But look at it this way. Nineteen per cent of the voting public comes out to roughly twenty million people. *Twenty million!* In other words, twenty million honest-to-God, flesh-and-blood citizens actually believed his claims to have been summoned to the candidacy by "the people," when the clear fact of the matter was that Perot's millions were paying for the offices and office workers and so on to organize this magic summoning. Twenty million people believed his pious assertions of outsiderness merely on the strength of his saying so: *Ich bin ein Outsider*. Twenty million people shrugged off his self-important paranoia about being hounded, beset, victimized by just about everyone from a Black Panther assassination squad to G.O.P photo-terrorists to Katie Couric. Twenty million people—think how they would all look, say, in single file, shuffling down an interstate—felt stirred by or ennobled by, or perhaps were just agreeable to, his furious little bursts of intolerance. They felt comfortable, as the saying goes, with his hostility. Twenty million people, each of whom had presumably been vacationing in hyperspace while the famous deficit was being accumulated, were now back from vacation and were sanctimoniously indignant at what had been done to them in their absence, and thought that a kind of fiscal Just Say No might do the trick. Come on, guy, just get under the hood and fix it. Twenty million people seems like a lot of people, and think how many more of them there might have been were it not for the candidate's penchant for what the mainstream press, with its exquisite capacity for euphemism, chose to regard as "erratic behavior" or "firing from the hip" or "shooting himself in the foot." The man was a veritable compendium, a Pandora's box, of personality disorders, combined with that most irritating of traits a wish—no, an absolute need—to blame everyone but himself for whatever went wrong. It *almost* made one miss Nixon.



The point is, the nation avoided Perot this time much as Earth avoids asteroids—not through skill or prescience but by a combination of blind luck and factors that can't be counted on always to recur. But *next* time (and doesn't it sound as if there's going to be a next time?) suppose the man hires himself a proper manager. Suppose he learns to control himself and his propensity for mouthing off. Suppose he discovers that it's an *addiction*, this tendency to bizarreness and the dictatorial impulse, and goes cold turkey. No more public displays of tinhorn autocracy, no more gratuitous mouthing off to "60 Minutes." What then does the future hold? A new, smoother Perot, kinder and gentler (as the legendary soon to be former President used to say), and not so angry, not always so riled up, not so defensive? Just learn to listen a little more, Mr. Perot. What a thought. It really makes one wish President-elect Clinton even more than the usual amount of luck. ♦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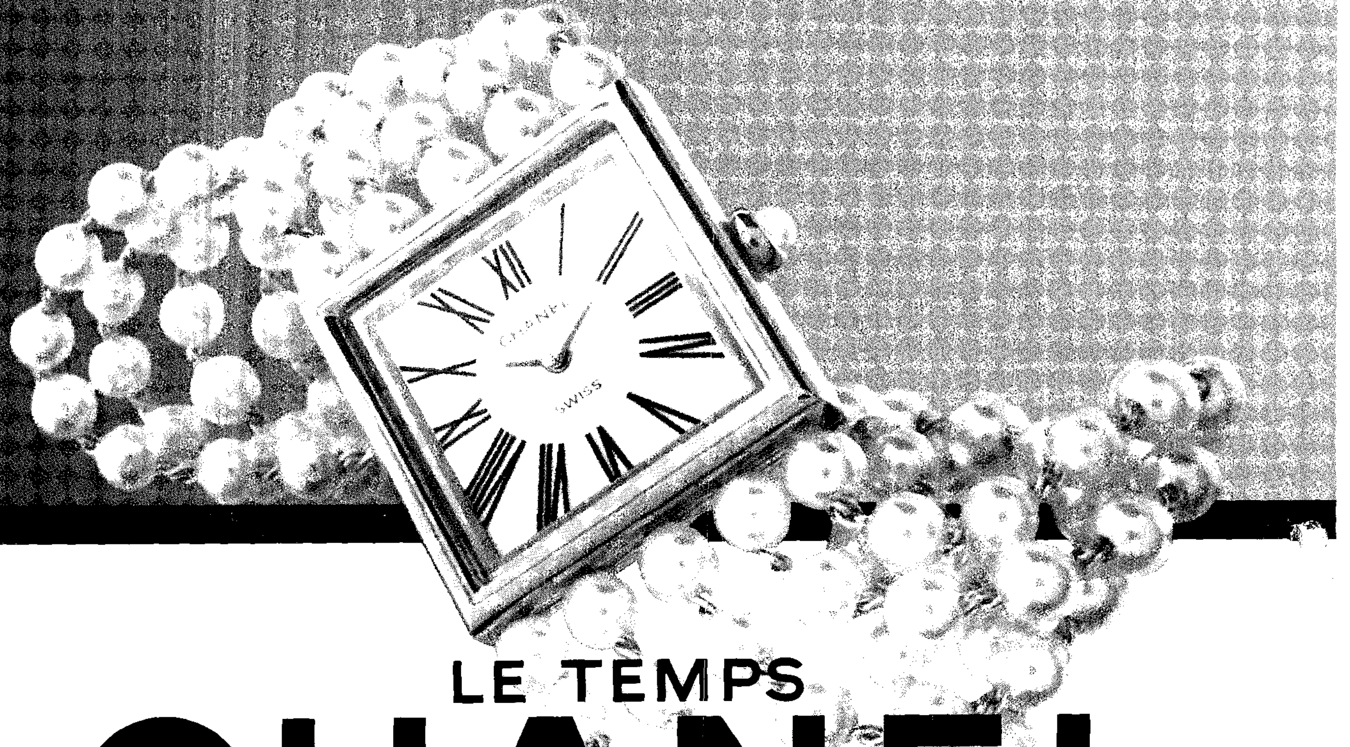

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